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HISTORY OF INDIA

FROM THE EARLIEST AGES.

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VOL. I.

THE VEDIC PERIOD AND THE MAHÁ BHÁRATA.

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PREFACE.

More than a century has passed away since the rise of British ascendancy in India, and yet a history which should combine a tolerably exhaustive review of the religion and civilization of the Hindús, together with an exposition of the policy which has hitherto guided the British Government in its dealings with Native powers, is still a desideratum in European literature. Accordingly this task has been attempted during a residence of some years in the country, under circumstances peculiarly favourable to its accomplishment; and in announcing the early publication of the first three volumes, it seems desirable to indicate the general character and scope of the entire work.

The materials for the History of India may be indicated under three distinct heads, viz.—

1st. The religious books of the Hindús, and especially the two great Epics, known as the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana, which may be regarded as the national treasuries of all that has been preserved of the history and institutions of the people.

2nd. The compilations of Mussulman annalists and biographers.

3rd. The original records which have been preserved in the several departments of the Government of India, and in the record rooms of the local governments, together with

the unofficial travels, narratives, and histories which have been published since the period when the peninsula of India was first explored by adventurers from Europe and elsewhere.

Three volumes of the projected History of India are now in course of publication, and are intended to comprise what may be called the Hindú period. The first volume, which is now presented to the public, comprises the Vedic period, and the traditions preserved in the Mahá Bhárata. The second volume, which is already in the press, will exhibit the traditions to be found in the Rámáyana, and will be published at an early date. The third volume is in preparation, and will include the results of the first and second volumes, as well as those which are to be drawn from the more salient points in Sanskrit and Mussulman literature; and will thus form a resumé of the History of India from the earliest period to the rise of British power.

It should be remarked that the primary object of the author is not so much to draw up a history of the literature or religion of the Hindús, or to exhibit the results of comparative philology, as to delineate the civilization and institutions of the people with especial reference to their present condition and future prospects, and to the political relations of the British Government with the great Indian feudatories of the Crown. But it must be borne in mind that the ancient traditions of the people of India are household words in every quarter of the Peninsula; that they have not passed away from the land in the same way that those of Stonehenge and Druidism, the worship of Thor and Odin, and the wars of the Heptarchy, have passed away from the people of England; but that they are to the Hindú all that the Old Testament is to the Jew, and all that the Bible, the Library, and the Newspaper, are to the European. In a word, it may be emphatically stated that a thorough acquaintance with the ideas and aspirations of the masses is impossible without a close familiarity with the subject-matter of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana.

It is intended that the History of India now announced should also comprise the whole period of British administration from the middle of the last century to the present day. But as regards this later history no definite announcement can at present be made. It will be sufficient to state that, should the writer be enabled to complete his design, the entire work will conclude with a history of British administration in India, and a critical review of the policy by which the British Government has been actuated since the first establishment of the late East India Company as a political power.

Whilst, however, the volume now presented to the public may be regarded as the first of a series, it may also be treated as complete in itself, inasmuch as it comprises a critical digest of the Mahá Bhárata, which is not only an independent work, but also the most voluminous and perhaps the most valuable Epic which has hitherto been preserved in a written language. To have undertaken the digest of such a work direct from the Sanskrit would probably have proved to be the labour of a lifetime; for a bare translation of the whole poem would alone occupy from twelve to fifteen octavo volumes, without any explanation or comment whatever. Fortunately however the task of analysing and abridging has been greatly facilitated in the present instance by the discovery of a manuscript translation of the more important portions of the Mahá Bhárata, which was lodged in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal many years ago under a wrong title, and which there is reason to believe was drawn up by the late Professor H. H. Wilson.[1] The author must also express his obligations to a young Sanskrit scholar, Baboo Obenash Chunder Ghose, who favoured him with oral translations of such portions of the poem as

[1] The manuscript was very illegibly written upon paper much embrowned by age, and seems to have been at least fifty years in existence. The whole has now been copied and indexed, and forms nine volumes folio. The original was, by some mistake, put away in the Calcutta library under the head of Bhagavat-Gítá, and was not discovered until four years ago, when the author accidentally sent for the supposed Bhagavat-Gítá, and found, to his surprise and gratification, that the manuscript contained the bulk of the Mahá Bhárata.

had been omitted from the manuscript in question, together with many popular interpretations of the ancient story which are given by the Pundits to their Native audiences.

In conclusion, the author must again be permitted to remark that his primary object is not to illustrate Sanskrit literature, or to treat of questions connected with the Sanskrit language, but to compile a political History of India. Accordingly all matters of mere antiquarian, or philological, or literary interest have been generally excluded from his work, partly because they do not fall within the scope of his labours, and partly because he is conscious that he is unfitted for a task which must be left to Sanskrit scholars. Indeed a History of India, which should be based upon a knowledge of the many languages, living and dead, which appertain to the great Indian continent, would be beyond the powers of any single individual, and could only be accomplished by a body of encyclopædists whose labours would necessarily extend over many scores of volumes. At the same time, however, no ordinary care has been spared to ensure correctness in reproducing the ancient traditions in the very condensed form in which they are now submitted to the general reader, and to verify interpretations of difficult passages by reference to the existing current belief of the people themselves.

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HISTORY OF INDIA.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE history of India is of universal interest from the light which it throws upon the annals of the human race; but it is of paramount importance to the people of Great Britain. It illustrates many phases of civilization which are at present but imperfectly apprehended, but which yet add largely to our knowledge of man. It refers to religions which express almost every aspiration in human nature, from the lowest animal instinct to the most elevated moral sentiment, and from the worship of the vilest images to the conception of One Being, spiritual and supreme. Above all, however, it indicates the past and present conditions of vast and varied populations, who may be regarded as a sacred trust confided to the British nation by what may be termed an irresistible destiny, or, in other words, a divinely ordered law.

Importance of the history of India.

New phases of civilization.

Significance of the religions.

Indicates the past and present condition of a people confided to Great Britain as a trust.

The history of the British administration of India has frequently been written, but the history of the

History of British administration distinct from the history of the Hindús.

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART I.

Difficulties in apprehending the history of the Hindús.

Hindús themselves is almost a blank to the European. Indeed the subject is generally regarded as perplexing and wearisome. The religion appears complicated, unmeaning, and often repulsive. The caste system excites no sympathy. The whole framework of society is opposed to European ideas. The names of persons and places are strange, and remembered with difficulty. The result has been, that whilst the ruling powers have ever exhibited a genuine desire to promote the well-being of the governed, they have in many cases but imperfectly apprehended the ideas and aspirations of the masses. Englishmen who have passed the greater part of their lives in India, would yet find it difficult to draw up an imaginary dialogue between two Hindús which should approximate to truth. Even Oriental scholars, who have familiarized themselves with the stores of Brahmanical learning, are but partially acquainted with the thoughts and ways of the many millions who are living under British rule. Nor will this ignorance be surprising when it is considered how little Englishmen knew, until late years, of the middle and lower classes of their own countrymen, although bound to them by a common language, a common literature, a common faith, and a common nationality.[1]

Personal observation of comparatively small value.

Imperfect knowledge of Oriental scholars.

Knowledge of the masses in England of recent growth.

[1] The extent to which European residents in India are ignorant of the domestic life of the Hindús was thus indicated by Lord William Bentinck sixty years ago; and the conditions specified are at least as true in the present day. "The result of my own observation during my residence in India is, that the Europeans generally know little or nothing of the customs and manners of the Hindús. We are all acquainted with some prominent marks and facts, which all who run may read; but their manner of thinking, their domestic habits and ceremonies, in which circumstances a knowledge of the people consists, is, I fear, in great part wanting to us. We understand very imperfectly their language. They perhaps know more of ours; but their knowledge is by no means sufficiently extensive to give a description of subjects not easily represented by the insulated words in daily use.

History of India to be found in the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana. Comprehensive character of the two poems.

The history of India, properly so called, is to be found in the two voluminous Epics known as the Mahá Bhárata, or "Great War of Bhárata," and the Rámáyana, or "Adventures of Ráma." These extraordinary poems comprise the whole of what remains of the political, social, and religious history of India, and may be regarded as the reflex of the Hindú world. But at the same time they are of such an interminable length, and exhibit such a complicated intertwining of traditions and fables, referring to widely different periods, races, and religions, that the student is frequently lost in a literary jungle. It is certain, however, that a familiarity with these two poems is as indispensable to a knowledge of the Hindús, as a familiarity with the Old Testament is indispensable to a knowledge of the Jews. They form the great national treasuries out of which the bards have borrowed the stories of their ballads, the eulogists and genealogists have taken the materials for their so-called histories, and the later Bráhmans have drawn the subject-matter of their religious discourses and the groundwork of their moral teaching; whilst nearly every plot in a Hindú drama, or sculptured group in a Hindú pa-

Interminable length and confusion of traditions and ideas.

Familiarity with the two poems indispensable to a knowledge of the Hindús.

We do not, we cannot, associate with the natives. We cannot see them in their houses, and with their families. We are necessarily very much confined to our houses by the heat. All our wants and business which would create a greater intercourse with the natives is done for us, and we are, in fact, strangers in the land."

A great deal of information may however be gathered from native students in the Government Schools, who will freely communicate their ideas and experiences to any masters or professor who may have obtained their confidence. During the three or four years that the present writer held the post of Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic at the Madras Presidency College, he is conscious of having acquired many facts respecting Hindú life which are not generally known; as well as a respect for that better and brighter side of the native character which is not generally appreciated, such as the warm attachment which subsists between friends and relatives, and the chivalrous devotion of sons to the wishes of their parents.

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART I.

goda, refers to some character or scene belonging to one or other of these famous poems. Few Hindús may perhaps be acquainted with the whole of these Epics, and none have ventured to subject them to a critical analysis and investigation; yet their influence upon the masses of the people is beyond calculation, and infinitely greater and more universal than the influence of the Bible upon modern Europe. The leading incidents and scenes are familiar to the Hindús from their childhood. They are frequently represented at village festivals, whilst the stories are chaunted aloud at almost every social gathering; and indeed form the leading topic of conversation amongst Hindús generally, and especially amongst those who have passed the meridian of life. In a word, these poems are to the Hindús all that the Library, the Newspaper, and the Bible are to the European; whilst the books themselves are regarded with a superstitious reverence, which far exceeds that which has ever been accorded to any other revelation, real or supposed. To this day it is the common belief that to peruse or merely to listen to the perusal of the Mahá Bhárata or Rámáyana, will ensure prosperity in this world, and eternal happiness hereafter; will give wealth to those who are poor, and children to the woman who is barren. At the same time they are cherished by the Hindús as national property, belonging to the national soil, and containing the records of the deeds of their forefathers in the days when the gods held frequent communion with the children of men.

Vast influence exercised by the two poems upon the masses.

Their extraordinary popularity.

Belief in beneficial results of reading them or hearing them read.

Before, however, reproducing in a historical form the main traditions which are embodied in these ancient Epics, there is one point which may be

Long chronological interval between the age in which the events took place and the age in which the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana were composed.

briefly indicated, especially as it will form a frequent subject of future discussion. The leading events belong to one age; the poems belong to another and a later period. In other words, the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana were not composed in their present form until a period long after that in which the heroes of the two poems lived and died. The result has been that the events of one age have been coloured by the ideas of another; and this chronological interval, which could scarcely have been less than one or two thousand years, is rendered more important from the fact that the religion which flourished in the age in which the events occurred, had more or less passed away, and a new one been established in the succeeding age, in which the poems were composed. The former may be called the Vedic period, the latter the Brahmanic period.

Events coloured by the ideas of the subsequent age.

Changes in religion during the interval.

Distinction between the Vedic and the Brahmanic periods.

The term Vedic is here borrowed from the Rig-Veda, which is a very ancient collection of hymns, or mantras, addressed to different deities who will be presently described. These hymns are of considerable value, inasmuch as they did not originally form part of a laboured and artificial ritual, but are the genuine outpourings of simple minds, eagerly praying to the gods for material and temporal blessings.[2] Evidence will be furnished hereafter to show

The Vedic period coeval with the main events recorded in the two Epics.

[2] The Vedas are four in number, but the first and oldest, known as the Rig-Veda, is the one which principally demands attention, as the other three belong to a subsequent and ritualistic age, and indeed are little more than recasts of the Rig-Veda. (See Wilson's Rig-Veda, Vol. I. Introduction; also Goldstücker's paper in the English Cyclopædia upon the Vedas.) The four Vedas are respectively termed the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sáma-Veda, and the Atharva-Veda.

Each Veda is divided into two parts, viz.—

1st, The Hymns, or Mantras, which express the wants and aspirations of the worshippers, and thereby throw some light upon the social condition of the people.

2nd, The Brahmanas, which belong to a ritualistic age, and refer to rites and

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART I.

that the Vedic age was the one in which the main traditions of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana seem to have taken place; whilst the Brahmanic age, which succeeded to the Vedic period, was the one in which the two poems were composed. The leading points of difference between the Vedic and Brahmanic periods may be thus indicated. In the Vedic period the Bráhmans were scarcely known as a separate community; the caste system had not been introduced, and gods were worshipped who were subsequently superseded by deities of other names and other forms. In the Brahmanic period the Bráhmans had formed themselves into an exclusive ecclesiastical hierarchy, endowed with vast spiritual powers, to which even the haughtiest Rajas were compelled to bow. The caste system had been introduced in all its fulness, whilst the old Vedic gods were fast passing away from the memory of man, and giving place to the three leading Brahmanical deities—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Again, the Vedic period is characterized by a patriarchal simplicity, which is wanting in the Brahmanic age, when the luxury and splendour of the Hindú Rajas had reached a climax side by side with the increased power and influence exercised by the Brahmanical hierarchy. It will thus be seen that before entering upon the story of the two Epics, it will be advisable to glance more particularly at the civilization and religion of the Vedic age, and thereby establish a

The Brahmanic age coeval with the composition of the two Epics.

Characteristics of the Vedic period.

Characteristics of the Brahmanic period.

Patriarchal simplicity of the Vedic period wanting in the later age of Brahmanical ascendancy.

Necessity for glancing at the civilization and religion of the Vedic age, before commencing the Mahá Bhárata and Rhámáyana.

ceremonies, of an unmeaning or artificial character, although of course a mystic significance is ascribed to each. The Aitareya Brahmanam is however of some value, as it illustrates the Brahmanical sacrifices of animals which were practised in that early age of Brahmanical ascendancy which partly preceded and partly overlapped the age of Buddhism. The Sanskrit text of the Aitareya Brahmanan, together with an English translation, has recently been published by Dr Haug of Bombay.

standard by which to clear the events which belong to that age from the Brahmanical husk which they subsequently seem to have received from the hands of the Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana.

The Vedic people.

The white-complexioned Aryans of the Punjab.

The Vedic people, whose wants and aspirations are expressed in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, are described as "fair-complexioned" Aryas, or Aryans, who had migrated at a remote period from some colder climate in central Asia, and subsequently settled in the Punjab, or "Land of the Five Rivers," in the north-western quarter of India, from whence, in the course of ages, they gradually pushed towards the east and south. They seem to have been called "fair-complexioned" in opposition to the darker complexioned tribes who had previously settled in India, and who are generally regarded as aborigines, and alluded to under a variety of names, such as Rákshasas, Asuras, Dánavas, Dasyus, and Daityas.[3]

The black complexioned settlers who preceded the Aryans, and who are regarded as aborigines.

[3] Whilst the term Aryan is applied to the Vedic invaders of India, the so-called aborigines are generally regarded as a Turanian race. These terms, Aryan and Turanian, are so frequently used that some explanation of their opposition seems necessary. In language the difference is one not only of roots but of grammars. In race the Aryan comprises the Greek, the Roman, and the modern European, whose tendencies have been to form themselves into national and political communities, to marry one wife, and to worship one supreme and spiritual deity. The Turanian, on the other hand, is represented by the modern Tartars, whose tendencies are apparently the reverse; they have little national or political cohesion, marry one or more wives without much sentiment, and worship gods and heroes without much idea of spiritual existence beyond that implied in the notion of ghosts and demons.

So far the opposition is intelligible, and the application of the terms Aryan and Turanian is convenient for the purpose of distinguishing one class of tendencies from another. But when the terms are broadly applied to families of mankind, and regarded as characteristics by which to distinguish the members of one great family from those of another, they are apt to mislead. Both the Aryan and the Turanian elements spring from a common human nature, and do not arise from a difference of instinct but from a difference of training, or rather a difference in the past and present conditions of national existence. Men speaking Aryan languages may abandon themselves to polygamous aspirations and to a superstitious reverence for material existences; and in like manner the Turanian may be

The simple patriarchal life of the Aryans is indicated in the Vedic hymns precisely as it is depicted in the main tradition of the Mahá Bhárata. They were a people partly pastoral and partly agricultural; keeping cows for the sake of their milk, butter, and curds, and sowing the land with grain. They also seem to have had some acquaintance with the manufacture of weapons and coats of mail, and to have sometimes undertaken sea-voyages for the sake of gain. These people prayed to their gods, as such a people might be expected to pray, for plenty of rain, abundant harvests, and prolific cattle; for bodily vigour, long life, numerous progeny, and protection against all foes and robbers, such as the cattle-lifting aborigines. Their gods appear to have been mere abstractions; personifications of those powers of nature on whom they relied for good harvests. They wanted seasonable rain, warmth, and fresh breezes. Accordingly, they prayed to the god of rain, the god of fire and light, and the god of wind. But from the very first, there appears to have been some confusion in these personifications, which led both to a multiplicity of deities, and the confounding together of different deities. Thus the conception of the god of rain was Indra, and he was identified with the firmament as well as with the unseen power which smote the rain-cloud and brought down the waters; and so important was the acquisition of rain in due season, that Indra is regarded as the sovereign of the gods, and subsequently became a type of sovereignty. But rain

Similarity between the patriarchal life indicated in the Vedic hymns and that indicated in the Mahá Bhárata.

Prayers for rain, abundant harvests, prolific cattle, bodily vigour, long life, numerous progeny, etc.

Vedic deities mere personifications of the abstract powers of nature.

Confusion in the personifications.

Distinction between Indra, the sovereign god who sent the rain, and Varuna, the god of water, or the ocean.

led to feel that his highest bliss on earth is derived from his marriage to one wife, and that the most elevated form of worship is that of one God,—the omniscient, the unseen, and the supreme.

and water are frequently different things, and thus there was another, and perchance an older, deity, named Varuna, who was particularly worshipped as the god of the waters, and deity of the ocean. Again, the conception of the god of fire was Agni, and Agni was not only the flame which burns upon the hearth or altar, but also the lightning which manifests itself in the clouds, and even the light of the sun, moon, and stars. Yet both the sun and moon appear as separate and individual deities, the former under the name of Surya, and the latter under the name of Soma or Chandra. Again, there seems to have been a striking difference as regards wind. The god of wind, or air, was Váyu; but the different breezes which bring on or accompany the rain, are called Maruts, and are represented as the attendants of Indra. Thus, whilst there is a Pantheon of separate and individual deities, the conception of one deity frequently overlapped the conceptions of other deities; and whilst the more prominent powers of nature, such as water, fire, and wind, were separately individualized, a monotheistic tendency was always at work, ascribing the attributes of every deity to each one in turn. Of these deities, the following appear to be the most important:—

Conception of Agni, as the god of light as well as of fire.

Separate deification of the Sun and Moon.

Distinction between Váyu, the god of wind, and the Maruts, or breezes.

Leading Vedic deities.

Rain.

Indra, god of the firmament. — Indra.
Varuna, god of the waters. — Varuna.

Fire.

Agni, god of fire. — Agni.
Súrya, the sun. — Súrya.
Soma, or Chandra, the Moon. — Soma, or Chandra.

Air.

Váyu, the god of wind.

Váyu.

Maruts, the breezes who attended upon Indra.

Maruts.

Yama, the god of death, or judge of the dead.

To these must be added a god of death, or judge of the dead, who was known as Yama. The characteristics of Yama as a Vedic deity would open up a large field of inquiry; but the subject at present is vague and speculative. In the Epics, Yama appears distinctly as a judge of the dead; and men who are about to die are frequently said to be about to go to the mansions of Yama.

Fanciful personifications which appear to have been regarded as minor deities.

The foregoing deities appear to have been the prominent gods in the Vedic Pantheon; but yet there are many fanciful personifications to whom hymns were addressed, such as Earth,[4] Sky, Food, Wine, Months, Seasons, Day, Night, and Dawn. The religious ideas connected with these personifications are difficult of apprehension; and it can only be inferred that the abstractions were regarded as spiritual existences, and worshipped accordingly. Perchance a better acquaintance with Rig-Veda may serve to solve the problem, for at present philologists appear to be occasionally divided as regards the true meaning of passages; and, indeed, seem inclined to depend upon the interpretation of commentators who flourished thousands of years after the composition of the hymns, and when the national mind had been entirely recast in a Brahmanical mould.[5]

[4] In a later and more mystic age, Earth became personified as the cow; but the conception of Earth in the Rig-Veda is more simple and primitive.

[5] The chronology of the Vedas is still a subject of discussion, but the data are vague and unsatisfactory. The Rig-Veda has been referred to about the twelfth or fifteenth century before Christ, and would thus synchronize with the Hebrew

The form of worship which prevailed amongst the Vedic Aryans, throws still further light upon the simplicity of ancient rites and ideas. Indeed, their whole religious system may be regarded as a child-like make-believe. They appear to have had no idols and no temples, but either performed their sacrifice in the open air, or else in a sacrificial chamber set apart in each dwelling. The so-called sacrifice was nothing more than the preparation of such simple viands as clarified butter, curds, wine, cakes, and parched grain; and the presentation of such articles to the different deities through the medium of fire. In other words, having deified certain abstractions, they personified such abstractions as beings with human wants and aspirations; and then invoked the gods with hymns to attend and partake of the food which had been prepared for them, and made believe that the gods accepted the invitation. Moreover, the offerings do not appear to have been always of a bloodless character, for Indra is described as rejoicing in roasted buffalo, and it is certain that a horse was occasionally sacrificed either to Indra or the Sun.

Child-like form of worship.

No idols or temples.

Presentation of simple articles of food to the different deities through the medium of fire.

The gods invested with human wants and aspirations, and invoked to partake of food.

Flesh offerings.

These religious rites were thus intimately connected with eating and drinking, and appear to have been performed at dawn, noon, and sunset. Ac-

Religious rites connected with eating and drinking, and performed at every meal.

conquest of Canaan; but still it cannot be denied that some of the hymns may be of far earlier date, whilst the composition of others may have belonged to a much later age. The popular appreciation however of the Vedic hymns and the Vedic deities seems to have died away in the subsequent ages of Brahmanism and Buddhism, and later commentators must have proceeded to the task of interpretation with their minds deeply imbued with the religious ideas of the Brahmanic period. The most famous commentator of the Rig-Veda was Sáyana Achárya, who flourished about the fourteenth century of the Christian era, or about three thousand years after the composition of the works upon which he commentated; an interval corresponding to that which separates the books of Joshua and Judges from some of our early English divines.

cordingly, it is easy to conceive that they may have formed an accompaniment to every meal, and may have been regarded almost as a part of the cookery. Thus the hymns may have been the expression of the aspirations of a simple people whilst the food was being cooked; and the so-called sacrifice may have been nothing more than the propitiation of the gods by the presentation of a portion of the victuals and liquors. Indeed, the preparations for cooking and sacrifice would be much the same. A fire would be kindled upon the ground, or upon a raised altar; the food would be either baked, or toasted, or boiled in kettles; bundles of a common but sacred species of grass, known as Kusa grass, would be sprinkled all round the altar for the make-believe gods to sit upon, and upon which the worshippers also sat themselves; ghee and soma juice[6] would be presented to the fire in ladles; and the god of fire would be invoked in a Vedic hymn, either to accept the offering, or to carry it away in flame to the other gods; after which the worshippers themselves partook of the meal which had been provided. Of course, such preparations would vary with the importance of the occasion. At the daily meal it may have been deemed sufficient to chaunt a few strains, and sprinkle a little ghee on the fire and grass; but on a set occasion, such as a marriage, an installation of a chieftain, or an assertion of sovereignty, the soma juice would be elaborately

Connection of cooking with sacrifice.

Greatness of the preparations varied with the importance of the occasion.

Daily meals.

Grand entertainments.

[6] Wilson's Rig-Veda, Vol. I. *Introduction*, p. xxiii. The Soma plant is the acid Asclepias, or Sarcostema viminalis, which yields to expression a copious milky juice of a mild nature and sub-acid taste. It does not appear to have been used in sacrifices until it had gone through the process of fermentation, and had become a strong spirituous beverage. Ib. p. 6, *note*.

prepared in large quantities, and presented to the invisible gods with curds, cakes, ghee, and milk; and the so-called sacrifice would be followed by a great feast amongst the guests assembled. In the hymns recited on such festivals, the worshippers would exult in the joy and satisfaction which the gods would feel in quaffing the soma, or in consuming the choice viands which had been prepared. In one vigorous hymn it is said that the gods, filled with food, are as impatient to enjoy the soma as bridegrooms long for their brides.[7] Sometimes a deity is supposed to be attracted by the grateful sound of the stone and mortar by which the soma juice was expressed from the plant; or by the musical noise of the churning-sticks by which the wine was apparently stirred up and mixed with curds; and the eager invokers implore the god not to turn aside to the dwelling of any other worshipper, but to come to them only, and drink the libation which they had prepared, and reserve for them all his favours and benefits. Indeed, the relations between the Vedic Aryans and their deities appear to have been of a child-like and filial character; the evils which they suffered they ascribed to some offence of omission or commission which had been given to a deity; whilst the good which they received was in like manner ascribed to his kindness and favour. In order, however, the more fully to apprehend the general scope and character of the religious ideas of the Vedic Aryans, it may be advisable to

Exultation of the worshippers in the gratification of the gods.

The deities supposed to be attracted by the noise of the mortar and churning sticks.

Relations between the Vedic Aryans and their deities resembling those between children and a father.

Necessity for a further development of the characteristics of the leading deities.

[7] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 83, v. 2. Wilson's Translation. It may here be noted that all references are made to Wilson's translation of the Rig-Veda, unless otherwise stated.

indicate, with a greater degree of detail, the leading characteristics of those deities who are prominent both in the Epics and the Rig-Veda.

Characteristics of Indra, or the god of the firmament.

The most prominent and popular deity in the Vedic ritual appears to be Indra, the giver of rain, and subsequently regarded as the sovereign of the gods. This deity, more than any of the others, is represented in the character of a human hero, rather than as a spiritual divinity, or, in other words, is more distinctly and intensely personified. It is true that he appears prominently as the god of the firmament, the hurler of the thunderbolt, who smote the rain-cloud and brought down the waters; and his worshippers implore him for blessings, such as robust health and plentiful harvests, long life and numerous progeny, and other good things of this world, which none but deity can bestow. But in many of the hymns he is represented as a warrior chief, endowed perhaps with supernatural strength and energy, but still with more of the human than of the miraculous type, and who especially shielded and protected those who were his friends, and smote and destroyed those who were his foes.[8] Moreover, he is frequently addressed in familiar terms, and in tones of remonstrance, which are incompatible with the idea of an omniscient and invisible deity. He is supposed to take especial delight in quaffing the soma juice; and his capacity in drinking it is celebrated with all the sympathetic praise and exaggerated description with which the northern bards loved to celebrate the Bacchanalian exploits of their

Attributes of a human hero superadded to those of the god of the firmament.

Frequently addressed in familiar terms.

Partiality for strong drink.

[8] Comp. Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymns 51 and 55, for the human character of Indra.

heroes of the olden time. Indeed, he is hymned as the discoverer of the soma plant, which was said to have been brought from heaven, and to have previously lain hidden in a rock like the nestling of a bird.[9] In many passages however, as already stated, his existence seems to have been spiritualized until he becomes a mere personified idea of the god of the sky or the firmament, and the winds are declared to be his followers, with whom he battles against the clouds in order to release the rain. Even in this capacity the popular imagination still delighted in depicting him in a human form, driving furiously in a chariot drawn by champing and foaming steeds; as the hero and protector of the fair-complexioned Aryans, who worshipped him with acceptable hymns and large oblations, and the enemy and destroyer of the black-complexioned aborigines,—the Rákshasas, the Dasyus, the Asuras, the Krishuas, and the Pisachis,—who neither sung his praises nor offered him the delicious and inebriating soma. He was thus a national deity, showering gifts upon his worshippers, but trampling upon those who gave him no libations, as a strong man tramples upon a coiled-up snake. He slew his enemies by thousands, and destroyed their cities by hundreds; he brought back the spoil, and recovered the cows which they had carried away. His worshippers called upon him to hasten, assail, subdue; to destroy his enemies with his thunderbolt; to smite the rain-cloud Vritra and bring down the waters.[10] "Slayer of Vritra, ascend thy chariot,

Hymned as the discoverer of the soma plant.

Spiritualization of Indra into a personified idea of the firmament.

Indra the hero of the Aryans, and foe of the aborigines.

Character of the Vedic hymns addressed to Indra.

Invocations to Indra in his human capacity.

[9] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 130, v. 3.
[10] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 80, v. 3.

for thy horses have been yoked by prayer; may the sound of the stone that bruises the soma attract thy mind towards us."[11] "Showerer of benefits, destroyer of cities, propitiated by our new songs, reward us with gratifying blessings."[12] In one hymn the worshippers are naïvely represented as saying:—"Quaff the soma juices, satiate thy appetite, and then fix thy mind on the wealth that is to be given to us."[13] In another Indra is told that the minds of his worshippers adhere to him, as affectionate wives to a loving husband.[14] Thus there are verses which describe him as a mere human chief, a strong man rejoicing in his strength, a warrior delighting in war, as well as in eating and drinking; and there are others in which his deeds and attributes are lauded with an Oriental exaggeration which renders his deification complete:—

Invocations to Indra as the Supreme Being.

"He who as soon as born is the first of the deities, who has done honour to the gods by his exploits; he at whose might heaven and earth are alarmed, and who is known by the greatness of his strength; he, men, is Indra.

"He who fixed firm the moving earth; who tranquillized the incensed mountains; who spread the spacious firmament; who consolidated the heavens; he, men, is Indra.

"He who, having destroyed Ahi,[15] set free the seven rivers; who recovered the cows detained by Bala; who generated fire in the clouds; who is invincible in battle; he, men, is Indra.

"He under whose control are horses and cattle, and villages, and all chariots; who gave birth to the sun and to

[11] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 87, v. 3.

[12] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 130, v. 10.

[13] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 54, v. 9.

[14] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 62, v. 11.

[15] Ahi is another name for Vritra, or the rain-cloud. Sometimes Vritra, or Ahi, is represented as a heavy cloud charged with water, and sometimes as a chief among the aboriginal tribes with whom the Aryas are at war.

the dawn; and who is the leader of the waters; he, men, is Indra.

"He to whom heaven and earth bow down; he at whose might the mountains are appalled; he who is the drinker of the soma juice, the firm of frame, the adamant armed, the wielder of the thunderbolt; he, men, is Indra.[16]

"May we envelope thee with acceptable praises, as youthful husbands are embraced by their wives."[17]

Characteristics of Agni or Fire.

Another famous Vedic deity, and one perhaps who is superior to Indra, although he never acquired the sovereignty of the gods, is Agni, or Fire. Even to the eye of the man of science there is something spiritual in the varied manifestations of fire, and something divine in its powers of destruction and purification. To this must be added the fact that in colder climates, like that from which the Vedic Aryans appear to have emigrated, the presence of fire is associated with home pleasures and family ties, and the domestic hearth becomes a vivid conception embodying pleasant memories and warm affections. But to man in a primitive state of existence, the presence of fire excites feelings of reverence. Its powers raise it to the rank of a deity whose operations are felt and seen. It burns and it consumes. It dispels the darkness, and with it drives away, not only the imaginary horrors which the mind associates with darkness, but also the real horrors, such as beasts of prey. In its lower manifestations as mere heat, it cooks the food and warms the dwelling, and it enables the artisan to forge weapons for the warrior, or to fashion jewelled ornaments to enliven the

Mysterious attributes of fire.

Family associations connected with fire in cold climates.

Reverence excited amongst a primitive people by the presence of fire.

General utility of fire.

[16] Rig-Veda, Mand. II. Hymn 12, v. 1, 2, 3, 7, 13.
[17] Rig-Veda, Mand. II. Hymn 16, v. 8.

charms of female beauty. In its higher manifestations it becomes identified with the light of the sun and moon; with the lightning which shoots from the sky and shatters the loftiest trees and strikes down the strong man; with the deity who covers the field with grain and ripens the harvest; with the divine messenger who licks up the sacrifice and carries it to the gods. Thus fire was regarded by the Vedic Aryans as in every way a sacred thing; and, as if to associate this deity with all that is nearest and dearest to the human heart, a fire was considered to be indispensable to the due performance of the marriage ceremony; and the presence of fire as a divine witness was deemed in some instances sufficient to sanctify the union of an impatient and impassioned pair.

Higher manifestations of fire.

Presence of fire necessary at the marriage ceremony.

Thus Agni, or Fire, is depicted in the Vedas in a variety of forms: as a priest, a divine messenger, a devouring element, and a deity who is the source and diffuser of light throughout the universe. In some hymns he is personified as an immortal being enjoying perpetual youth, and travelling in a car drawn by red horses.[18] He is frequently invoked as a priest, and like an officiating priest he is said to have brought prosperity to the worshipper. As a divine messenger he was implored to bring the gods to the sacrifice,[19] and the loving wives of the gods to partake of the soma juice.[20] As a devouring element he is invoked as the bright and purifying deity who was charged with all the invocations of the gods; whilst the mere operations of Agni as a consuming

Agni, or Fire, represented in various forms.

Agni as an immortal being.

Agni as a priest and divine messenger.

Agni as the devouring element.

Character of the Vedic hymns addressed to Agni.

[18] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 36, v. 15; Mand. IV. v. 8.
[19] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 31, v. 17.
[20] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 22, v. 9.

fire are frequently described in language eminently poetical. "When generated from the rubbing of sticks, the radiant Agni bursts forth from the wood like a fleet courser." [21] "When excited by the wind, he rushes amongst the trees like a bull, and consumes the forest as a Raja destroys his enemies." "His path is blackened, and the birds are terrified at his roaring." [22] In his more domestic capacity, Agni is described as an ornament in the sacrificial chamber, like a woman in a dwelling.[23] He is young and golden-haired, the domestic guardian, the protector against evil spirits, malevolent men, and noxious animals.[24] Like the divine Sun he is the supporter of the universe, but he abides on earth like a prince surrounded by faithful friends, and men sit down in his presence like sons in the dwelling of a father. "Such as thou art, Agni, men preserve thee constantly kindled in their dwellings, and offer upon thee abundant food: Do thou, in whom is all existence, be the bearer of riches." [25] But still there are passages referring to Agni, as indeed there are verses referring to almost every other Vedic deity, in which that individual god is represented as supreme and absolute.[26] Thus in two particular hymns, Agni is

Invocations to Agni as a destroyer.

Invocations to Agni in his domestic capacity.

Invocations to Agni as a deity.

Invocations to Agni as the Supreme Being.

[21] Rig-Veda, Mand. V. Hymn 29, v. 6.

[22] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 58, v. 4; Hymn 65, v. 4; Hymn 94, v. 10 and 11.

[23] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 66, v. 3.

[24] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 36, v. 5, 15.

[25] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 73. The whole of this hymn is singularly illustrative of the worship of Agni.

[26] This coexistence of Monotheism and Polytheism is very clearly explained by Prof. Max Müller in the following very eloquent passage:—"When these individual gods are invoked, they are not conceived as limited by the power of others, as superior or inferior in rank. Each god is to the mind of the supplicant as good as all the gods. He is felt, at the time, as a real divinity—as supreme and absolute, in spite of the necessary limitations which, to our mind, a plurality of gods must entail on every single god. All the rest disappear for a moment from the vision

called the ruler of the universe, the lord of men, the wise king, the father, the brother, the son, the friend of men; whilst the powers and even the names of the other deities are distinctly applied to this god.[27]

Language of praise to be distinguished from the expression of thought.

Care must however be taken not to confound the language of praise with the expression of thought. The extravagance of Oriental adulation will permit an Asiatic courtier to address some petty chief or Raja as the king of kings, but this by no means implies an idea of universal empire. At the same time, the language of praise, eager to propitiate and boundless in expression, may have to some extent originated that later conception of the one Supreme Being, the God above all gods, which is undoubtedly to be found in the Vedas.

Indra and Agni, the chief gods of the Rig-Veda.

These two deities—Indra and Agni, Rain and Fire—are the chief gods which were worshipped by the Vedic Aryans. In the hymns they are sometimes identified with each other, and sometimes they are associated in the same hymn; but even as individuals more hymns were apparently addressed to each than to any other divine being in the Vedic pantheon. The remaining gods, however, though less prominent and perhaps less popular, are still well worthy of attention. They comprise the personifications of water, and the sun and moon, air and the winds, all of which were associated with the ideas of deity.

Characteristics of Varuna, or Water.

The god of waters was named Varuna.[28] Next

of the poet, and he only who is to fulfil their desires stands in full light before the eyes of the worshippers." Hist. of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 532.

[27] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymns 1 and 2. Comp. Max Müller, Hist. of Sanskrit Lit. p. 533.

[28] Upon this point there is some obscurity. Varuna was undoubtedly regarded as the deity of water, but the name is in some verses applied to the sun and even

to fire, perhaps water has always occupied the most prominent place in the religious worship of nations in general. It purifies, and it is an emblem of purity; and is as necessary in every household as fire. At the same time, the ever-flowing current of a great river awakens ideas of life and infinity; of a past and a future; of going on ever and ever, we know not whence and we know not where, but ever flowing. Springs and rivers, however, are generally separated into individual abstractions, which are personified as divine beings; and the highest conception of one universal god of the waters seems to have been gathered from a familiarity with the sea. Thus amongst a maritime people, the god of the ocean, the lord of tempests, the ruler of the rushing, boiling waves, ever occupies an important place in the sphere of religious thought; and here it should be remarked that the Vedic Aryans were evidently acquainted with the sea, for the hymns contain allusions to merchants, to sea voyages, and to ships with a hundred oars. In a more material or credulous age this deity might be depicted as a mere monster, half fish and half human; but in the higher Aryan conception he is represented as a spiritual existence, powerful to destroy but mighty to save, that could sink the strong man into the depths of the sea, or bear him in safety to the shore. In a later stage the conception rises higher and higher, until a deity is shadowed forth that rewards goodness and punishes sin. The following hymn to Varuna, felicitously translated by Prof. Max Müller, exhibits this deity in the two-fold character of controlling tem-

Mysterious attributes of water.

Water a purifier and a household necessity.

Ideas awakened by the currents of great rivers.

Springs and rivers generally separated into individual abstractions.

Conception of a god of the ocean.

Distinction between a material conception of a sea monster, and the Aryan conception of a spiritual existence.

Varuna considered as a deity who rewards goodness and punishes sin.

Deep religious feeling in a hymn addressed to Varuna.

to the personification of day. In the Epics he is invariably regarded as water, and is emphatically the god of the ocean.

pests and punishing sin; and in so doing indicates a tone of religious feeling not so far removed from modern ideas as might have been expected:—

"Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

"If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

"Through want of strength, thou strong and bright god, have I gone to the wrong shore; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

"Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

"Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host, whenever we break thy law through thoughtlessness; have mercy, almighty, have mercy."[29]

Characteristics of Súrya, or the Sun.

Súrya, or the Sun, is another important Vedic deity; and indeed seems under different names to have always held a high place amongst the primitive gods of every nation, by virtue of its prominence in the heavens, and the extent to which its influence is felt upon earth. Its daily course and its annual course, its welcome rising in the morning and its glorious setting in the evening, must all have excited the keenest curiosity amongst a child-like and inquisitive people; and, at the same time, the imagination alone was left to account for the existence of phenomena which in a non-scientific age are altogether beyond human ken. Thus it seems extremely probable that one of the earliest efforts of poetical genius was to personify the Sun as the deity of light, travelling through the blue ether in a golden chariot which all men might see, drawn however by steeds which were invisible to the out-

Prominence of the Sun in all ancient religions.

Personification of the Sun one of the earliest efforts of ancient bards.

The golden chariot and invisible steeds.

[29] Max Müller, History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 540.

ward eye, but which were easily assumed to be white, resplendent, and beautiful beyond expression. In the Vedas the attributes of this deity are frequently the same as those of Agni, especially that of originating and diffusing light; but still the Sun stands forward as a deity altogether distinct from Fire, when described as journeying through the firmament in an upward and downward course, and especially in his character of measuring days and nights. This god is apparently addressed under a variety of names, such as Súrya, Savitri, Mitra, Aryaman, and others; but in the Epics he is chiefly known by the name of Súrya, and was regarded as the great ancestor of the solar race who appear in the Rámáyana. In the higher conceptions the Divine Sun is regarded and invoked as a spirit pervading all things, as the soul of the world and supporter of the universe;[30] and this idea is said to be indicated in the celebrated Vedic verse known as the Gayatri, which down to the present day still forms a part of the daily devotions of the Bráhman.[31]

Attributes of Súrya similar to those of Agni.

Súrya a distinct personification from Agni.

Súrya regarded as the mythical ancestor of the Solar race of Ayodhyá.

Súrya regarded as a divine spirit perwading all things.

The Gayatri.

In connection with the worship of the Sun, there are some obscure deities, known as the

The twelve Adityas.

[30] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 73, v. 3.

[31] Rig-Veda, Mand. III. Hymn 62, v. 10. The original Sanskrit of this verse appears to be simple enough. Wilson's translation is as follows :—"We meditate on that desirable light of the divine Savitri, who influences our pious rites." Sir William Jones's paraphrastic translation was as follows :—"Let us adore the supremacy of that divine sun, the godhead, who illuminates all, who recreates all, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress towards his holy seat." Colebroke proposes the following version :—"Earth! Sky! Heaven! Let us meditate on (these and on) the most excellent light and power of that generous, sportive, and resplendent Sun, (praying that) it may guide our intellects." From information gathered personally from educated Bráhmans, the writer has been led to infer that Colebroke's translation exhibits the nearest approximation to the religious ideas involved in the words. The verse is apparently an invocation to the several deities who are implored by the worshipper to aid his intellect in the apprehension and adoration of God.

Adityas.[32] These are said to be the sons of Aditi, who is apparently identified with the universe.[33] It is not sufficiently clear how these Adityas were regarded by the Vedic worshippers, but at a later period they were represented as being twelve in number, and were apparently identified with the twelve signs of the zodiac, or rather with the sun in twelve different characters, each character corresponding to the sign through which it passed in succession. The most important fact connected with this circle of divinities is that the god Vishnu, so prominent in the later mythology, appears in the Rig-Veda merely as one of the Adityas. Also Aryaman, Mitra, Varuna, and Savitri, are identified both with the Sun and with certain of the Adityas.

The god Vishnu originally an Aditya.

Of the remaining Vedic deities but little remains to be said. Their individual character may be easily inferred from their names, whilst their form of worship appears to differ in no way from that of the deities already described. Soma, or the Moon, which appears in some Pantheons as a female divinity corresponding to the male personification of the Sun, is chiefly celebrated in the Vedas in connection with the soma plant; but it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, indifferently under the names of Chandra and Soma, as the mythical progenitor of the great Lunar race of Bhárata. Two obscure deities, known as the Aswins, are apparently a personifica-

Characteristics of the minor Vedic deities.

Soma, or Chandra, or the Moon.

Connected in the Vedas with the soma plant.

Regarded as the mythical progenitor of the Lunar race of Bhárata.

The two Aswins.

[32] Comp. Wilson, Rig-Veda, Vol. I. Introd. p. xxxiii. Also Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Part IV. p. 101.

[33] The Vedic verse is as follows:—"Aditi is heaven; Aditi is the firmament; Aditi is mother, father, and son; Aditi is all the gods; Aditi is the five classes of men; Aditi is generation and birth." Upon this verse Sáyana remarks:—"Aditi is hymned as the same with the universe." Wilson, Rig-Veda, Vol. I. p. 230, and *note*.

tion of light and moisture, and as sons of the Sun seem sometimes to be identified and multiplied as the sun's rays.[34] They are invoked in several hymns, but do not appear to have been invested with any peculiar attributes, beyond that of being young and handsome, and riding on horses. The deifications of Váyu, or the air, and of the Maruts, or the winds, are frequently invoked, in many instances, in conjunction with Indra and Agni. The Maruts especially, whose power was manifest, are described in such figurative language as is usually applied to the strong and impetuous winds by poets of all nations and ages. In this way they are depicted as roaring amongst the forest trees, and blowing up the clouds for rain; but they are also personified in the imaginations of the Vedic psalmists as youthful warriors bearing lances on their shoulders, delighting in the soma juice like Indra, and, like him, the bestowers of benefits upon their worshippers.

Váyu.

The Maruts.

The next Vedic deity who may be taken into consideration is Ushas, or the personification of the dawn. This divinity scarcely appears in the Epics, and can hardly have been extensively worshipped, but yet is especially deserving of notice from the remarkable contrast which the conception presents to those of other gods, and especially to the idea of Indra. In the place of the impetuous warrior, strong and drunk with wine, and cleaving the clouds with his thunderbolt, we have the vision of early morning, of the first pale flush of light, imaged as a pure and lovely maiden awakening a sleeping

Characteristics of Ushas, or the dawn.

Contrast between the conception of Ushas and that of Indra.

[34] In the Epics they are said to have been the physicians of the gods, and are constantly represented as twins.

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world as a young wife awakens her children. This poetical conception seems to have had peculiar charms for the old Vedic bards; and, in truth, the dawn of early morning in India is singularly grateful to the feelings, and in the mind of the Vedic worshipper was associated with early prayer as well as with early duties. In addition to the refreshing coolness and delightful stillness of the hour, there is a peculiar whiteness in the atmosphere, not so expressive as moonlight, but infinitely more delicate and more suggestive of innocence and purity. Thus the night with all the horrors of darkness—the fear of ghosts, demons, snakes, tigers, and midnight robbers—is supposed to have passed away before the rising of this white-robed maiden, the first in all the world who is awake, and the first to appear at the invocation of the gods. But notwithstanding the unsubstantial character of the original personification, it nevertheless became in many hymns a vivid conception of a deity. As a mere female, Ushas is likened to a young bride, with perhaps more warmth of painting than would suit modern taste:—

Poetry of the conception of Ushas.

Associations connected with the dawn in India.

Vedic hymns addressed to Ushas as a maiden.

"Goddess, manifest in person like a maiden, thou goest to the resplendent and beautiful sun; and, like a youthful bride before her husband, thou uncoverest thy bosom with a smile."[35]

Vedic ideas of Ushas as a deity.

But as a divinity, the language respecting Ushas is much more elevated:—

"Ushas, daughter of heaven, dawn upon us with riches; diffuser of light, dawn upon us with abundant food; beautiful goddess, dawn upon us with wealth of cattle."[36]

[35] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 123, v. 1.
[36] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 48, v. 1.

"This auspicious Ushas has harnessed her vehicles from afar, above the rising of the sun, and she comes gloriously upon man with a hundred chariots."[37]

"First of all the world is she awake, triumphing over transitory darkness; the mighty, the giver of light, from on high she beholds all things; ever youthful, ever reviving, she comes first to the invocation."[38]

Minor Vedic deities the mere personifications of poetry.

Such were the chief gods of the Aryans, and to them may be added some others less prominent, such as the personifications of Food, of Day and Night, and of the Seasons. These require no special description, inasmuch as they are little more than poetical personifications; and probably at the period of their composition they were as little connected with religious worship as the songs of Hafiz were connected with the sentiments of Mahomedan devotion. These creations of the fancy have ever been the favourite product of the Aryan mind, and thus the Vedic "Hymn to Pitri, the Divinity of Food,"[39] is even surpassed in intensity of personification by Burns's ballad of "John Barleycorn," and Tennyson's exquisite poem on the "Death of the Old Year."[40]

Comparison of ancient and modern personifications.

Vedic conception of one Supreme Being.

Having thus sketched generally the individual character of the leading deities of the Aryans as they appear in the Rig-Veda, it may be advisable to glance at that conception of One Supreme Being, as in all and above all, which finds full expression

[37] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 48, v. 7.

[38] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 123, v. 2.

[39] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 187.

[40] The great master in the power of personifying abstractions, until they become objects of actual interest, is John Bunyan; an interest however which is derived more from the religious experiences of the author than from a large knowledge of human nature.

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in the Vedic hymns. Upon this point the following passages will be found very significant:—

Monotheistic verses.

"Who has seen the primeval being at the time of his being born; what is that endowed with substance which the unsubstantial sustains; from earth are the breath and blood, but where is the soul; who may repair to the sage to ask this?"[41]

"What is that One alone, who has upheld these six spheres in the form of an unborn?"[42]

The following hymn, translated by Professor Max Müller, still further expresses the conception of monotheism, and indeed seems to indicate that the idea itself is a necessary idea forced upon the mind by a thoughtful consideration of the phenomena of the universe.[43]

Grand monotheistic hymn translated by Professor Max Müller.

"In the beginning there arose the Source of golden light: He was the only born lord of all that is. He established the earth, and this sky:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

"He who gives life, He who gives strength; whose blessing all the bright gods desire; whose shadow is immortality; whose shadow is death:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

"He who through His power is the only King of the breathing and awakening world: He who governs all, man and beast:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

"He whose power these snowy mountains, whose power

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[41] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 144, v. 4.

[42] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 144, v. 6.

[43] The translation which follows has been borrowed from Mr Max Müller's History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 569. That eloquent scholar is perhaps mistaken in alluding to the idea as "an instinctive monotheism." The theory that the Aryan nations may possess an instinct which is denied to the Turanian peoples seems untenable. An instinct is an element of human nature, and not a mere characteristic of a race; and it appears more probable that what are called characteristics of a race, arise from peculiarities of development and history rather than from any original diversity in human nature.

the sea proclaims, with the distant river: He whom these regions are as it were His two arms:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

"He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm: He through whom the heaven was established, nay, the highest heaven: He who measured out the light in the air:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

"He to whom heaven and earth, standing firm by his will, look up, trembling inwardly: He over whom the rising sun shines forth:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

"Wherever the mighty water-clouds went, where they placed the seed and lit the fire, thence arose He who is the only life of the bright gods:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

"He who by his might looked even over the water-clouds, the clouds which gave strength and lit the sacrifice, He *who is God above all gods*:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

"May He not destroy us, He, the creator of the earth; or He, the righteous, who created the heaven; He who also created the bright and mighty waters:—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?"

Vedic conception of marriage.

The true conception of marriage, involving the idea of the union of one woman to one man, also finds expression in the Vedas. Husbands and wives in twos and twos are described as presenting their oblations together;[44] and in one hymn which dwells upon the duality of the two Aswins, the pair of deities are compared with pairs of almost everything that runs in couples, including a husband and a wife, and two lips uttering sweet sounds.[45]

[44] Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 131, v. 3. Also Mand. Hymn 43.

[45] Rig-Veda, Mand. II. Hymn 39. There is however an exceptional passage in which a young Rishi named Kakshivat celebrates the generosity of a Raja who had given him his ten daughters in marriage. (Rig-Veda, Mand. I. Hymn 126.) This reference to polygamy as well as two hymns relating to a horse sacrifice, will be considered hereafter.

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Such, then, were the leading characteristics of the principal deities of the Aryans in the old Vedic age, when the new colonists were still dwelling in the neighbourhood of the five rivers. During the subsequent age of Brahmanism, the spiritual conceptions and aspirations passed in a great measure away; a new dynasty of deities arose; and the gods of the Vedas lost their hold upon the national sympathies, and shrivelled more and more into human heroes with human instincts and passions. Meantime the circumstances of the people, and their geographical position, had undergone a great and significant change. In the Vedic age the Aryan people were a band of agriculturists and herdsmen, and were still dwelling in the neighbourhood of the Punjab; but in the Brahmanic age they had become a conquering power, and had made their way down the fertile valleys of the Ganges and Jumná, and established kingdoms which are still famous in ancient story. This period of conquest implies the existence of a large military class; and in connection with this subject it may be remarked that the most significant change which appears to have taken place about this time was the institution of caste. In the Vedic age there appears to have been no direct traces of a caste system; but in the Brahmanic age the distribution of the people into castes is one of the most prominent features, and this caste system has prevailed more or less down to the present day. Thus the caste system seems to have arisen in the period which intervened between the Vedic and Brahmanic age; in other words, between the time when the Aryans appeared as simple colonists in the land of the five rivers, and the time

Subsequent decay of the Vedic religion in the Brahmanic age.

Changes in circumstances and geographical position.

Existence of a military class and institution of caste.

Origin of the caste system in the period between the Vedic and Brahmanic ages.

when they had become a conquering power, and established Aryan empires at Delhi, Oude, Tirhút, and Bahar, under the ancient names of Bhárata, Kosala, Mithila, and Magadhá. The question accordingly remains for consideration of how far the circumstances which attend the invasion of a well-populated country by a band of foreign emigrants, and the subsequent establishment of the settlers as a dominant and imperial power, are calculated to lead to the introduction of caste, and the perpetuation of a caste system for ages afterwards. This question is of more general importance than is generally supposed. The tendency of all foreign conquests is to create a caste feeling between the conquerors and the conquered; and this feeling becomes intensified when the difference is one not merely of political relations, but of colour, language, and religion. In the progress of another century, for instance, from the present date, the old caste antagonism amongst the Hindús may in some measure have passed away; but in its place there will be a caste feeling between Europeans, East Indians, and Natives, altogether different from that exclusiveness in different ranks of society which prevails amongst European nations.

Question of how far the establishment of the Aryans, as a conquering power, was calculated to lead to the introduction of caste.

Importance of the question from the general tendency of foreign conquest to create a caste feeling.

Many of the difficulties connected with this interesting subject of inquiry will be cleared up, as far as the Hindús are concerned, by means of the evidence furnished by the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana. But still it appears necessary for the continuous identification of the Aryan people, and their separation from the Turanian populations by whom they were apparently surrounded, and with whom they must to some extent have intermingled, to

Question of how far the elements of an opposition of classes are to be found in the Rig-Veda.

ascertain which of the castes had an Aryan origin, and how far the elements of an opposition of classes is to be found in the Rig-Veda.

Four castes existing in the Brahmanic age.

In the Brahmanic age the great body of the people were divided into four castes, as follows:—

Bráhmans.

1st, Bráhmans, or priests; sometimes called preceptors.

Kshatriyas, or Rajas.

2nd, Kshatriyas, or soldiers; also called Rajas, or sovereigns.

Vaisyas.

3rd, Vaisyas, or merchants and farmers.

Súdras.

4th, Súdras, a servile class who tilled the soil.

Outcastes and slaves.

Below these was a nondescript population who were treated as outcastes, and who appear as the slaves of the Súdras. Of the four castes, the three first mentioned are distinguished from the fourth caste in a very particular manner. The Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas, are each invested at a certain age with the sacred thread, from which circumstance they are entitled the "twice born," to distinguish them from the Súdras, who are not permitted to wear the thread. This line of demarcation between the three twice-born castes and the Súdras is far broader according to caste ideas than that between the Bráhman and the Kshatriya, or the Kshatriya and the Vaisya. Accordingly the most plausible conjecture appears to be that the three twice-born castes may be identified with the descendants of the Aryans of the Rig-Veda; whilst the Súdras, who form the mass of the population, may be regarded as the descendants of a Turanian people, who settled in India ages before the Aryans, and at some remote period contemporary perhaps with the earliest Egyptian dynasties. As to the outcastes, known in the south of India by the general name of Pariahs, they

Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas distinguished from the Súdras by the thread, and the designation of "twice born."

Hypothesis that the three twice-born castes are descendants of the Aryans of the Rig-Veda, and that the Súdras are a pre-Aryan people.

Antiquity of the Pariahs, or outcastes.

probably were the descendants of an aboriginal people possessing a still more remote antiquity, who were originally conquered by the Súdras, and of whom some may have escaped to the hills and become the ancestors of the existing hill tribes.

Three distinct classes of worshippers indicated in the Rig-Veda. 1st, A peaceful and religious class, the ancestors of the Bráhmans.

Now although no caste system appears in the Rig-Veda, the hymns certainly present glimpses of three distinct classes of worshippers. One class, the most prominent of all, comprised a people who evidently possessed strong religious instincts. They prayed in earnest language to primitive deities for such simple benefits as colonists in a new country might be expected to crave; namely, seasonable rains, abundant harvests, prolific cattle, and plenty of children. They were certainly a peaceful community, and appear to have been altogether indisposed for war, for they prayed not for victory but for protection. They do not even seem to have sacrificed to any god of war, unless Indra may be regarded as such; but their offerings were exclusively made to what might be termed family or domestic deities, who were supposed to supply the daily wants of a simple but contemplative people. Moreover, with the exception of the soma wine, which was especially quaffed by Indra, there was nothing of an orgiastic character in their worship. They invoked the gods, and propitiated them with such bloodless offerings as butter, curds, and milk. Again, whilst they implored the gods for protection, and lauded their exploits against robbers, cattle-lifters, and other enemies, they manifested no warlike spirit, no direct aspiration for revenge, such as would find expression in the prayers or hymns of a people devoted to deeds of arms. Indeed, it might almost be said that the flow of religious feeling which

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runs through the greater number of the Vedic hymns, is altogether at variance with that exultant delight in blood and slaughter which is generally manifested in the ballads of a warlike people. Altogether the hymns of the Rig-Veda, as far as peaceful pursuits are concerned, are of such a character that it is not difficult to identify the people who gave them utterance with the ancestors of the later Bráhmans.

2nd, A military class, the ancestors of the Kshatriyas.

A second class of Vedic worshippers adopted a different order of religious rites, namely, the sacrifice of animals; thus they immolated horses to Indra and the Sun, and Indra is also said to have delighted in roasted buffalo. This difference in sacrifice involved a difference of food, and in all probability a difference of avocation. A peace-loving community might be contented with a milk and vegetable diet; but a military community, to whom physical strength was of the highest importance, would delight in flesh meat, and such they would offer to the gods. It is a significant fact that the allusions to animal sacrifice are by no means frequent in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, whilst they find full expression in the ritualistic works of a later age, in which the Bráhmans are represented as the sacrificers.[46] From this it may be inferred that so long as the Vedic Aryans were dwelling in the Punjab, the priestly orders still retained their bloodless sacrifices; but as they advanced further and further into the interior, and depended more and more upon their military protectors, so they found it more and more necessary to propitiate the warriors by the worship of their gods and the performance of animal sacrifices. The

Marks of difference between the peaceful and the military class.

Increased prevalence of animal sacrifices when the Aryans became a conquering power.

[46] See especially the Brahmanam Aitareya. Haug's translation.

military community thus referred to may therefore be identified with the ancestors of the Kshatriyas.

3rd, A mercantile class, the ancestors of the Vaisyas.

The third class of worshippers cannot be traced quite so easily, but still glimpses are to be obtained of a mercantile and maritime community, who especially worshipped Varuna, the god of the ocean, and who may be identified with the Vaisyas. Here it may be remarked that no opposition seems ever to have arisen between the Vaisyas and the other two castes, like that which broke out between the Bráhmans and the Kshatriyas. Indeed the wealth of the Vaisyas rendered them at a later period of considerable influence, inasmuch as they employed Bráhmans to perform sacrifices, and took Kshatriyas into their pay as soldiers and guards.

Origin of the difference between the Bráhmans and the Kshatriyas.

The early separation of the Bráhmans from the Kshatriyas, the priest from the soldier, is a question of much historical importance, and will be further discussed hereafter. For the present it may be sufficient to remark that the separation does not appear to have originated so much in those superstitious caste ideas which prevailed at a subsequent period, as in the difference of avocations, sentiments, and aspirations. What the priest was to the feudal Chieftain of the Dark Ages, such was the Bráhman to the Kshatriya. The Bráhman subsisted upon a diet of milk and vegetables, and spent his time in tending his flocks and herds, in composing hymns to the different deities, and in speculative inquiries as to the origin of man and the universe, and their relationship to the Supreme Being. As to the history of the past, apart from religion, he cared nothing, excepting so far as he might succeed in converting ancient traditions into a vehicle for religious teaching. Ac-

Characteristics of the Bráhmans.

cordingly in a later age he readily falsified those traditions for the purpose of promulgating Brahmanical ideas and exalting the pretensions of his own caste; and it was doubtless by this process that the Bráhmans ultimately succeeded in forming themselves into a sacerdotal community, who sought to bring all classes and ranks, Turanians as well as Aryans, under the yoke of ecclesiastical or caste supremacy.

Characteristics of the Kshatriyas.

The Kshatriyas, on the other hand, were eaters of flesh meat, and delighted in war and the chase, and especially gloried in the exploits of their forefathers. The consequence was that they possessed a rich stock of traditions which appear to have been handed down from generation to generation in the form of ballads. Thus the Kshatriyas appear as a fighting and conquering class, and originally exercised such influence over the masses as to be known as Kings or Rajas, whilst their god Indra was worshipped as the emblem of sovereignty. Ultimately, however, they appear to have degenerated into effeminate priest-ridden sovereigns and mercenary soldiers; and whilst such sovereigns served the Bráhmans out of superstitious fear, the soldiers entered the service of the Vaisyas for the sake of pay.

Extent of the separation between the Bráhmans and the Kshatriyas in the Vedic age.

The question of how far the two classes of Bráhmans and Kshatriyas were really separated from each other in Vedic times does not appear to be indicated in the Rig-Veda; but it may be inferred from the data which will appear hereafter. Originally they probably grew up side by side, and their cause was identical, namely, the subjugation of the country. Indeed it is by no means improbable that the duties of priest and warrior were originally fulfilled by one and the same individual, the father,

the Chieftain, or the Raja. Gradually, however, the Chieftains or Rajas may have found it convenient to engage priests specially for the performance of sacrifices and other rites and ceremonies; and at such a stage, a stage to which the original story of the Mahá Bhárata appears to belong, the haughty Kshatriyas would look down with some disdain upon the mercenary or mendicant priest. But in due course the priests, as already indicated, formed themselves into a class, and exercised a vast and mysterious influence upon the masses; and in later times of peace and luxury, they established a spiritual and caste ascendancy, which overshadowed and overawed the mightiest Raja of the Kshatriyas. Indeed whilst the more ancient Kshatriyas seem to have regarded the Bráhmans with much the same disdain as might have been exhibited by the half-converted warriors of the Dark Ages towards the wandering Friars, no priest or confessor ever possessed a more powerful sway over King or Baron, than was exercised by the later Bráhmans over the Hindú Rajas.

Rise of Brahmanical ascendancy.

The original traditions and institutions which appear in the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana are undoubtedly of Kshatriya origin, and in their earliest form were probably little more than ballads, which were sung or chaunted by bards and eulogists at the feasts and festivals of the Kshatriyas. Under such circumstances the details may have been exaggerated by the old Kshatriya bards in order to glorify the ancient Rajas, and gratify the Chieftains present by extravagant praises of their ancestors. Occasionally too the bards seem to have introduced poëtical embellishments, and artificial turns of a

Traditions and institutions in the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana, chiefly of Kshatriya origin.

Exaggerations and embellishments of the Kshatriya bards.

plot, which were more in accordance with a later and luxurious stage of civilization, and also better calculated to awaken and keep alive the interest of large and mixed audiences. But the latest compilers of the Mahá Bhárata were unquestionably Bráhmans; and they appear to have resolutely and consistently falsified the Kshatriya traditions, for the purpose of promulgating their own tenets of religion and morality; and especially for asserting their own supremacy as an hereditary sacerdotal caste, invested with supernatural powers, and superior not only to the Rajas but to the very gods of the Kshatriyas. Ancient Bráhman sages, under the name of Rishis, are abruptly and absurdly introduced in order to work miracles of the wildest and most senseless character, and to compel the reverence and obedience of such deities as Indra to Brahmanical authority. Moreover acts which are contrary to morality and common decency, are occasionally introduced for the depraved purpose of representing the more famous Bráhmans as the direct progenitors of the more famous Rajas. Again, Rajas are described as paying a reverence to Bráhmans amounting to worship, and as rewarding them with extravagant profusion, probably as examples for later Rajas to follow. Fortunately however for the purposes of history, these interpolations can generally be detected by the supernatural character of the details, and may therefore be largely eliminated; excepting in those cases where the later fable has been so intertwined with the more authentic narrative, that it is impossible to separate the one from the other without danger of mutilating the original Kshatriya tradition.

Later Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata. Their falsifications and interpolations.

Data by which the fact of an interpolation can be established.

Besides these exaggerations of Kshatriya bards and Brahmanical compilers, an element of Buddhism is frequently perceptible in these ancient legends. But inasmuch as it is often difficult to decide upon the exact line of separation between Brahmanism and Buddhism, much in the same way as it is often difficult to draw the precise line between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, it will be sufficient for the present to indicate very briefly such traces of Buddhism as they arise, and reserve the general question for separate discussion hereafter.

Buddhistic element in the Mahá Bhárata.

The form in which the contents of these poems will be hereafter exhibited in the present volumes requires perhaps some explanation. A mere translation would be unreadable to any but the practised critic; a bare analysis without sufficient detail, would be a skeleton without life and blood, and consequently would be comparatively useless for the purposes of history. Accordingly a middle course has been adopted. Large masses of supernatural matter have been either briefly indicated, or cut away altogether. Brahmanical discourses and religious myths have been generally eliminated, to be reconsidered subsequently in connection with the religious ideas and belief of the people. Many episodes have been excluded, especially from the Mahá Bhárata where they mostly abound, but a sufficient number have been exhibited in outline; whilst three favourite stories, which are apparently types of three different epochs of Hindú history, have been preserved by themselves under a separate head. Finally, the residue has been recast in English prose in such a condensed form as would preserve the life and spirit of the ancient traditions

Form in which the two Epics are exhibited in the present history.

Neither a translation nor an analysis, but a condensed paraphrase interspersed with explanation, commentary, and historical inferences.

without oppressing the reader with needless repetition and unmeaning dialogue; and has been interspersed with such explanations and commentary, and such indications of the inferences to be derived from different phases in the traditions, as might serve to render the whole acceptable to the general reader.[47]

Degree of credibility to be attached to the subject matter thus exhibited.

But when the main stories of the "Great War of Bhárata," and the "Adventures of Ráma" have been reproduced from the ancient poems, and cleared of most of the non-essential and non-historical matter, a question arises as to the degree of credibility to be given to the residue. Upon this point it may be remarked that where there is no motive for deception, and no departure from nature, a general belief may be accorded to the incidents; and even when the incidents themselves are doubtful, there is no occasion for withholding a general belief in the pictures of life and manners which the descriptions convey. It has already been admitted that the ancient bards did occasionally indulge in Oriental exaggeration and embellishment, which a critical age refuses to accept as abstract truth. Deeds of heroism and feats of skill or strength are frequently described in the language of hyperbole; and so too are the goodness of men and the beauty of women, or the wickedness and deformity of those aboriginal tribes with whom the ancient Hindús were occasionally at war. Garlands of jewels are substituted for garlands of flowers; thrones of gold and silver for

Exaggerations and embellishments to be treated with leniency.

[47] Some idea of the enormous bulk of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana may be formed from the estimate that a literal translation of the former would occupy about fifteen volumes octavo, whilst a similar version of the latter poem would fill about six volumes octavo.

seats of a less rare and costly material; gorgeous palaces for rude forts of mud or stone. Again, the humour of incidents is often heightened by the interpolation of telling words in the dialogue; or the interest of the plot is increased by the introduction of new but trivial details. Such additions, however, are both allowable and natural in a primitive age, when the historian is little more than a narrator of stories, and is appreciated, not for his critical powers, or his impartiality, or his rigid adherence to abstract truth, but for the interest he excites and the amusement he conveys. Such history should of course be accepted, not as a sober narrative or unimpassioned disquisition, to be perused in silence and calmness in the study, but rather as a romantic ballad to be chaunted with modulated voice before a large and mixed audience of men and women of all ages, with uncultured minds probably, but with every passion of the human heart in full and healthy play. Under such circumstances the reader or chaunter is rewarded, not by calm approval, but by tears and laughter, and by the excitement which is perceptible in lips and eyes. These conditions of Hindú historical literature will be fully indicated in the progress of the narrative; but if the European reader would really identify himself with a Hindú audience, he must enter the covered court-yard of a wealthy zemindar during a marriage-feast, or approach a shady tree on the evening of some village festival. Then when the gods have been worshipped, and the dancing-girls are weary, he may watch the appearance of a Bráhman with his sacred palm-leaves, and soon perceive that the ears of young and old are all open to the ancient song.

Simple character of ancient Hindú historians.

Ballad histories.

Excitement of the audience.

Circumstances under which portions of the Epics are chaunted or read.

PART II.

THE MAHÁ BHÁRATA.

CHAPTER I.

FAMILY TRADITIONS OF THE HOUSE OF BHÁRATA.

Opening scene of the Mahá Bhárata at Hastináp ur, near the modern Delhi.

THE opening scene of the Mahá Bhárata is laid at the city of Hastinápur, on the banks of the upper course of the river Ganges, and about sixty miles to the north-east of the modern city of Delhi. At the present day scarcely a vestige remains, for in the progress of ages the river has changed its course, and carried away nearly every trace of the ancient site; but local tradition has preserved the name, and still points to the spot which has been immortalized in the national Epic. This geographical position is one which well deserves attention. Hastinápur was situated in the northern part of India, at a distance of more than a thousand miles from the eastern frontier on the Bengal side, but scarcely more than three hundred miles from the western frontier on the side of the Indus. Accordingly it may be regarded as an outpost of that great Aryan race, who are generally supposed to have made their appearance in the Punjab, or land of the five river-

Significance of the site as an outpost of the Aryans.

at some period of remote antiquity, and to have gradually pushed their way towards the east along the fertile valleys of the Jumná and Ganges.

Approximate description of Hastinápur.

The city and palace at Hastinápur are not described with any exactitude of detail; and yet so many ancient remains still exist in India, bearing a general resemblance to each other, that it would be by no means difficult to depict Hastinápur as it probably appeared at the date when the events recorded in the Mahá Bhárata actually occurred. A nondescript population, which may have comprised cultivators, herdsmen, mechanics, retainers, and petty shopkeepers, seem to have dwelt in an assemblage of huts, or houses, constructed of mats, bamboos, mud, or bricks, which was dignified by the name of the city. The palace was very likely built after a similar fashion, though on a larger scale, and with some pretensions to strength. Probably it was a rude quadrangular building, having men's apartments on one side, and women's apartments on the other; whilst the third side was devoted to the kitchens and household servants. The fourth side, the most important of all, formed the gateway or entrance Hall, so common in Hindú palaces; and in this Hall, which was open to all comers, the Raja sat in Council with his kinsmen and subordinate Chieftains, and administered rude patriarchal justice, or discussed affairs of State, such as wars, marriages, alliances, or other business connected with the Raj. In the neighbourhood of the city, lands were probably cleared and cultivated, and herds of cattle were pastured; all of which either belonged to the Rája, or to Chieftains subordinate to the Rája.

The City.

The Palace.

The Council Hall.

The Raj.

The Raj of Bhárata, an Aryan empire, established by the hero Bhárata amidst an aboriginal population.

This simple community was known as the Raj

of Bhárata, after the name of the great hero Bhárata, who is said to have first established an empire in India. It may be called Aryan, because its traditions have been preserved in the Sanskrit language; and because, as will be perceived hereafter, its institutions resembled those of other branches of the Aryan race; and the Raj itself had probably been wrested from an aboriginal population by the Aryan invaders. The extent of the Raj is doubtful, and the frontiers probably advanced or receded according to the prowess or otherwise of the reigning Raja, either against the aboriginal tribes in the neighbourhood, or against an enemy or rival of the same race. Judging from the homely character of some of the details, the rule of the Raja could scarcely have extended many miles from the city of Hastináp ur; but these details are mingled with references to far distant localities, and general allusions to conquest and empire. Such references, however, are probably only the exaggerations of bards and eulogists, intended to gratify the later Rajas; but, if true, they would carry the frontiers of the Raj of Bhárata over all or the greater portion of the Doab, or that fertile territory which lies between the Ganges and the Jumná, and extends from the foot of the Himálayas to the junction of the two rivers. At a later period the exploits of Bhárata and the greatness of his empire were celebrated with even a larger amount of laudation and extravagance. He was a Mahá Raja, or great Raja, or Raja of Rajas; and his Raj included all the kingdoms of the earth. Indeed, so famous became the name of Bhárata, that to this day the whole continent of

Doubtful extent of the Raj.

Name of Bhárata applied in modern times to all India.

India is known to the Hindús by the name of Bhárata-varsha, or the country of Bhárata. How far these assertions are to be believed will be best gathered from the following history.

Mythical character of the more ancient traditions of the royal house of Bhárata, which precede the main story of the great war.

The ancient traditions of the royal house of Bhárata might have been expected to throw some light upon the early history of the Aryan conquest of India. Unfortunately, however, the attention of the Kshatriya bards was directed not so much to the Aryan conquest of the aborigines of the country, as to a desperate fratricidal struggle which took place between two rival branches of the family. Early legends have been preserved of the Rajas who reigned before the breaking out of this great war, but they have been reduced to such a mythical condition by Kshatriya bards and Brahmanical compilers as to be generally worthless for the purposes of history. Thus the Kshatriya bards declared that the Rajas of Bhárata were descended from the Moon, and that one of their number conquered Indra, the ruler of the gods; whilst the Brahmanical compilers, not to be behindhand in the work of supernatural laudation, admit both statements, but add that the Moon itself was begotten by one of their own Rishis or saints, and that the Raja only conquered Indra by the aid of the Bráhmans. The authentic tradition which forms the groundwork of the Mahá Bhárata really commences with Raja Dhritaráshtra, whose sons, known as the Kauravas, engaged in a long and bitter rivalry with their cousins the Pándavas, who were the sons of Raja Pándu; and it was this rivalry between the Kauravas and Pándavas that ultimately

Kshatriya myth that the Rajas of Bhárata were descended from the Moon.

Brahmanical myth that the Moon itself was begotten by an ancient Rishi.

Commencement of the main story of the Mahá Bhárata with Raja Dhritaráshtra.

led to the great war from which the Mahá Bhárata derives its name.[1]

Legends of the Rajas of Bhárata from Bhárata to Dhritaráshtra.

The traditionary history of the royal house of Bhárata, from the great Rája Bhárata himself down to the commencement of the reign of Dhritaráshtra, when this rivalry first began, comprises a few legends which are worthy of notice; inasmuch as by removing the supernatural matter, which may be regarded as a mythical husk added by the later bards, it is possible to arrive at the authentic tradition which forms the kernel of the legend. The narratives in question are four in number, and may be thus indicated:—

Four legends.

1st, Legend of Raja Bhárata, who played with lions in his childhood, and afterwards founded the great Raj of Bhárata.

2nd, Legend of Raja Sántanu, who married a young wife in his old age.

3rd, Legend of Raja Vichitra-vírya, who died childless, and had sons begotten to him by Vyása, the sage.

4th, Legend of Rajas Pándu and Dhritaráshtra, and their sons the Pándavas and Kauravas.

1st, Legend of Raja Bhárata.

The legend of Raja Bhárata may now be related, as follows:—

[1] The Mahá Bhárata really opens with a so-called sacrifice of snakes, in which vast numbers of snakes, who are confounded with an ancient race of serpent worshippers known as Nágas, are said to have been forced by certain Brahmanical incantations to enter the fire of a great sacrifice which was being performed by a Raja named Janamejaya, in revenge for the death of his father, who had been bitten by a snake. The origin of this confusion of snakes and Nágas will be explained hereafter. It will be sufficient to say that according to the myth Janamejaya subsequently killed a Bráhman, and that in order to expiate this dreadful crime, he listened to a recitation of the whole of the Mahá Bhárata, which was performed by Vaisampáyana, the pupil of Vyása, the sage. Accordingly the Mahá Bhárata, which is said to have been originally composed by Vyása, is supposed to be written exactly as it was recited by Vaisampáyana.

Once upon a time the valiant Raja Dushyanta was hunting in the forest, when he beheld the beautiful Sakuntalá, the daughter of Kanwa the sage; and he prevailed on the damsel to become his wife by a Gandharva marriage, and gave her his ring as the pledge of his troth. Then Dushyanta returned to his own city, whilst Sakuntalá remained in the hermitage of her father. After this Durvásas the sage visited the hermitage of Kanwa, but the thoughts of Sakuntalá were fixed upon her husband, and she heard not the approach of the sage. And Durvásas cursed the damsel, that she should be forgotten by the man she loved; but after a while he relented, and promised that the curse should be removed as soon as Dushyanta saw the ring. And Sakuntalá found that she was with child, and she set off for the palace of her husband; but on her way she bathed in a sacred pool, and the ring dropped from her finger and was lost beneath the waters. When she reached the palace of the Raja, his memory had departed from him, and he would not own her to be his wife; and her mother came and carried her away to the jungle, and there she gave birth to a son, who was named Bhárata. And it so happened that a large fish was caught by a fisherman, and the ring of Dushyanta was found in the belly of the fish, and carried to the Raja; and Dushyanta saw the ring, and he remembered the beautiful Sakuntalá, who had become his wife by a Gandharva marriage. And the Raja went into the jungle and saw the boy Bhárata sporting with young lions, and setting at nought the lioness that gave them suck; and his heart burned towards the lad; and presently he beheld the sorrowing Sakuntalá, and he knew that Sakuntalá was his wife, and that Bhárata was his son. So Raja Dushyanta took Sakuntalá and Bhárata to his own city; and he made Sakuntalá his chief Ráni, and appointed Bhárata to succeed him in the Raj.

Amour of Dushyanta and Sakuntalá in the jungle.

Bhárata, the son of a Raja by the daughter of a Brahman.

Curse of Durvásas the sage.

The lost ring.

The ring found.

Raja Dushyanta sees his son Bhárata playing with lions.

Dushyanta takes Sakuntalá to wife, and acknowledges Bhárata to be his son.

Now when Bhárata was grown, he became a mighty warrior, and conquered all the regions of Hindustan and called them by his own name; and he was the most renowned of all the Lunar race, who boasted that they were the children of the Moon. And Bhárata begot Hastin, who built the city

Foundation of the great Raj of Bhárata by Raja Bhárata.

of Hastinápur;[2] and Hastin begot Kuru, and Kuru begot Sántanu; and Sántanu was the great-grandfather of the men who fought in the war of Bhárata.

Review of the foregoing story of the birth of Bhárata.

The foregoing legend of the birth of Raja Bhárata is very prominent in Hindú story, and forms the groundwork of Kálidása's charming drama of "Sakuntalá, or the Lost Ring." Its historical significance, however, can only be apprehended by a consideration of the suspicious incident in the legend, namely, the curse of Durvásas. This incident is supernatural, and may be eliminated from the legend on two grounds; first, it is incredible that the curse of a Bráhman should possess the efficacy ascribed to it in the story; and, secondly, if the efficacy of the Bráhman's curse could be admitted, it is incredible that a holy sage should have inflicted such a curse upon a maiden for so trifling a provocation.[3] By excluding the curse, the legend assumes a natural and historical form. A Kshatriya, whilst hunting in the forest, falls in love with the daughter of a Bráhman, and prevails upon her to accept him as her husband by what is called a Gandharva marriage. This Gandharva marriage is an anomaly. It is simply a union prompted by mutual desire, and

Significance of the tradition rendered perceptible by eliminating the supernatural incident of the curse of Durvásas.

Historical form of the tradition.

Gandharva marriage, a union without marriage ceremonies.

[2] The bare statement that the city of Hastinápur was founded by Hastin, the son of Bhárata, is not without value. According to local tradition the original seat of the empire of Bhárata was much further to the north-west, namely, at the site now occupied by the ruins of Takh-i-Bahi, in the country of the Yusufzais to the northward of Peshawur. (See Bellew's *Report on the Yusufzais*, p. 136.) It is therefore easy to infer that the Aryans pushed on from the neighbourhood of Peshawur in a south-easterly direction through the Punjab until they reached the banks of the Ganges, where they erected an outpost at Hastinápur.

[3] It may be remarked that Durvásas appears as the most irascible sage in the whole range of Brahmanical tradition. He cursed Indra so that he lost his strength and sovereignty merely because he dropped a flower which had been given him by the sages. The mythical character of Durvásas is well displayed in the fable of the birth of Karna, which will be related further on.

consummated without any preliminary ceremonies whatever. It was legalized by the Brahmanical legislator, Manu, probably to cover the scandal of the lawless amours in which the Kshatriyas indulged; and is entitled Gandharva, because such unions prevailed largely amongst the Gandharvas, or mountain tribes on the western Himálayas. Manu however declares that none but Kshatriyas may contract such marriages; and he denounces them as base marriages, the offspring of which will act cruelly, speak untruthfully, and abhor the Vedas.[4]

Reluctance of the Kshatriya to acknowledge the daughter of a Bráhman to be his wife.

But to return to the story. The Kshatriya in question prevailed upon the Bráhman's daughter to yield to his desires by engaging to marry her, and giving her his ring as a pledge of his troth. He then abandoned the damsel, and returned to his own city. Subsequently the damsel found that she was about to become a mother, and accordingly proceeded to the house of the Kshatriya to demand the fulfilment of his promise. Unfortunately, she had lost the ring, and in the absence of such evidence the Kshatriya conveniently forgot his engagement to marry the daughter of a priest. Ultimately when the ring was found, and he either saw or heard of the exploits of Bhárata in taming lions, he acknowledged the young hero to be his son, and made the mother his chief Rání.

Inferiority of the Bráhman to the Kshatriya in the Vedic age.

The question of why the Kshatriya was reluctant to acknowledge the daughter of a Bráhman to be his wife, will be solved hereafter, when it will be seen that in the Vedic period the Bráhman held an inferior rank to the Kshatriya. The reason for the interpolation of the

[4] Manu, c. III. v. 26, 32, 41.

myth respecting the curse of Durvása will then, in like manner, become apparent; it was intended to explain the reluctance of the Kshatriya, without wounding the pride or lowering the assumption of the later Bráhmans.[5]

2nd, Legend of Raja Sántanu.

The second legend, namely, that of Raja Sántanu, turns upon a more natural event. Sántanu was third in descent from Bhárata. The legend is as follows:—

Desire of old Raja Sántanu for a young wife.

Now Raja Sántanu, the great-grandson of Bhárata, reigned in much glory in the city of Hastinápur, and he had many sons by the goddess Gangá,[6] but only one lived to be a man, and his name was Sántanava. And it came to pass that when Raja Sántanu was very old, he desired to marry a damsel who should be young and beautiful; and Sántanava found such a damsel as his father desired. But the parents of the girl would not give her to the Raja, saying:—"If our daughter bear sons to the Raja, they will neither of them succeed to the Raj; for when Sántanu dies his son Sántanava will become Raja." Then Sántanava determined to sacrifice himself in order to gratify his father; and he made a vow to the parents of the damsel, saying:—"If you will give your daughter in marriage to my father, I will never accept the Raj, or marry a wife, or become the father of children by any woman; so that, if your daughter

Vow of his son Sántanava, who was henceforth known as Bhishma, or "the dreadful."

[5] Sakuntalá's own birth is lost in a myth, which was probably intended to exalt her origin. She is represented as being not the real but the adopted daughter of Kanwa the sage. Her real father is said to have been Viswámitra, a sage who is celebrated in Brahmanical legend on account of his having been originally a Kshatriya, who subsequently became a Bráhman as the reward (?) of his austerities. Her mother was a celestial nymph named Menaka. The myth is of no value, and may be dismissed as a pure fabrication.

A tradition has been preserved in Hebrew history which bears a curious resemblance in some points to that of Sakuntalá and the ring, excepting that it is free from mythical matter. See the story of Judah and Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 12—26.

[6] The idea that Sántanu had children by the goddess Gangá, who is sometimes regarded as the genius or spirit of the river Ganges, and sometimes as the river itself, is one of those senseless myths by which the Bráhmans sought to glorify the ancestry of the later Rajas.

bear a son to the Raja, that son shall succeed him in the Raj." And the vow of Sántanava became noised abroad, and ever from that day he went by the name of Bhíshma, or "the dreadful," because of his dreadful vow.[7] And the parents of the damsel gave her in marriage to Raja Sántanu, and her name was Satyavatí; and she bore two sons to the Raja. After this, Raja Sántanu was bowed down with age, and his soul departed from his body; and he left his two younger sons, and their mother, Satyavatí, under the care of his eldest son, Bhíshma.

Death of Rajah Sántanu.

The foregoing legend of Raja Sántanu calls for but little remark. That an aged Raja should sigh after the pleasures of matrimony, and desire to marry a young and blooming damsel, is an incident by no means unfrequent; but the idea that a son should sacrifice his right to the succession, and devote himself to a life of celibacy, for the sake of gratifying a doting father, can only be ascribed to that exaggerated idea of filial obedience which appears to be peculiar to the Hindús. Henceforth Bhíshma becomes the patriarch of the family, and is represented as a model of faithfulness and loyalty; and indeed stands forth as one of the leading characters in the Mahá Bhárata.

Review of the foregoing legend of Raja Sántanu.

Bhíshma, a leading character in the Mahá Bhárata.

The third legend, namely, that of Raja Vichitravírya, involves two questions of considerable importance, namely, the real extent of the Raj of Bhárata, and the connection of the sage Vyása with the royal

3rd, Legend of Raja Vichitravírya.

[7] An instance of the injury to which a son is exposed in the effort to gratify an aged father, is to be found in the family history of the late Ameers of Scinde. Meer Roostum was the eldest son of Meer Sohrab, who was the founder of the Talpoora dynasty in Upper Scinde, and died in his eighty-sixth year in 1830. Poor Meer Roostum procured a young wife for his aged father, and the young wife gave birth to the present Ali Moorad, who subsequently deprived Meer Roostum of his Raj, and effected his utter ruin. It was a curious question at the time whether Ali Moorad did not owe a debt of gratitude to Meer Roostum for that intervention without which he could scarcely have been born.

house at Hastinápur. Before, however, opening up these discussions, the legend may be related as follows:—

Loyalty of Bhíshma towards his two half-brothers.

When the days of mourning for Raja Sántanu were fully over, the faithful Bhíshma refused to become Raja, and placed the elder of his two half-brothers upon the throne; but the young Raja was haughty and arrogant, and he went to war against the Gandharvas, who dwelt upon the hills, and he was slain by the Raja of the Gandharvas.

Accession of Vichitra-virya.

Then Bhíshma placed the younger brother upon the throne, and ruled the Raj until he should be grown; and the name of the young Rája was Vichitra-vírya.

Legend of Bhíshma carrying away the three daughters of the Raja of Benares to be wives to Vichitra-virya.

In process of time Bhíshma and the Rání Satyavatí began to think of procuring wives for Raja Vichitra-vírya, that he might perpetuate the race of the great Bhárata. And it was told to Bhíshma that the Raja of Kási [8] had three daughters, and that the Raja was celebrating a Swayamvara in order that they might choose their own husbands. So Bhíshma thought in his heart that the three damsels might become wives to Vichitra-vírya; and he ordered his chariot, and drove to the city of Kási, that he might see them with his own eyes. And Bhíshma beheld the damsels, and saw that they were very beautiful; but the city was filled with Rajas from all quarters of the world, who desired to wed them. And Bhíshma did not wait for the day of the Swayamvara, nor did he ask the Raja to give his daughters in marriage to Raja Vichitra-vírya; but he seized the three damsels, and placed them in his own chariot, and challenged every Raja present to do him battle. Then the Rajas attacked Bhíshma in great wrath; but he was strong in arm, and skilful in the use of weapons; and he fought and conquered them every one, so that there was not another Raja left to come out against him. Thus did Bhíshma win the daughters of the Raja of Kási, and carry them away in triumph to the city of Hastinápur.

Bhíshma defeats all the Rajas at Benares.

The Rani Satyavati resolves to marry the three damsels to her son Vichitra-virya.

Now when Bhíshma had brought the three damsels into

[8] Kási was the ancient name of the city of Benares.

the city, he took them to the palace, and led them into the presence of the Ráni, and told her how he had carried them away to be wives to Vichitra-vírya. And Satyavatí was much pleased with the beauty of the damsels, and she bestowed great praises upon Bhíshma, and resolved on marrying them to her son, the Raja. But when the day had come on which the marriage was to be performed, the eldest of the three, whose name was Ambá, prayed the Ráni not to marry her to the Raja, saying:—"My father has already betrothed me to the Raja of Salwa, and I entreat you to send me to Salwa, for I cannot marry a second husband." And the Ráni replied:—"Two wives will suffice for my son; therefore let Ambá go to the house of her husband." So Bhíshma sent Ambá under a safe-conduct to the Raja of Salwa; and Ambá told the Raja how she had been carried away by Bhíshma, and had come to fulfil her betrothal. But the Raja of Salwa replied:—"You have entered the dwelling of a strange man, and I will not take a woman to be my wife who has seen the face of a strange man." Then Ambá wept very bitterly and said:—"O Raja, no man has wronged me, and Bhíshma is the last man who would lay his hand upon a woman, because of his dreadful vow: If, however, you cannot take me to be your wife, I pray you to receive me as your concubine, and suffer me to dwell here under your protection." But the Raja would not listen to her words, but ordered his servants to thrust her out of his city; and she went into the jungle and perished very miserably.[9]

Ambá, the eldest, declines to be married, as she is already betrothed.

Miserable fate of Ambá.

Meantime the marriage ceremonies of Raja Vichítra-vírya were performed in the palace at Hastinápur, and the two younger daughters of the Raja of Kási became his wives. And Vichitra-vírya took great delight in his wives, and his days passed away in much joy; but after a while he sickened and withered away until he died; and he left no child behind him, nor had either of his two wives any hope of becoming

Marriage of Vichitra-virya.

Death of Vichitra-virya without issue.

[9] The story of Ambá is overlaid with a mass of mythical matter, which has been eliminated from the above text as mere unmeaning fabrication. Thus she is said to have met with the mythical hero Parasu Ráma, who vainly tried to avenge her cause, but whose real home was more than a thousand miles from Hastinápur, on the Mahendra mountain near the coast of Coromandel.

a mother. And the two widows were filled with sorrow, and the Ráni Satyavatí wept very bitterly, for her two sons were dead, and neither of them had left a son to perpetuate the race of Bhárata.

Ancient custom of raising up seed to a deceased kinsman.

Now the custom was that when a man died and left no son, his brother or near kinsman took his widows, and raised up seed to the dead man. So after some days the Ráni Satyavatí said to Bhíshma:—"Take the Raja's widows, I pray you, and raise up sons that shall be to him as his own sons."

Bhíshma's refusal.

But Bhíshma replied:—"How can I do this thing? Have I not vowed a vow that I would never become the father of children by any woman?" So Satyavatí called upon a kinsman of her own to do her bidding; and his name was Vyása. Now this Vyása was a great Bráhman sage who dwelt in the jungle; and his form was terrible to behold on account of his many austerities. And Vyása proceeded to the palace at Hastinápur, and fulfilled the wishes of the Ráni; but his presence filled the widows with terror. The first widow shut her eyes when she beheld him, and she gave birth to a son who was blind, and who was named Dhritaráshtra; and the second widow was so white with fear that she gave birth to a son who was pale, and who was named Pándu. Then Satyavatí requested Vyása to become the father of a third son, who should be without blemish; and the first widow would not go to him, but arrayed her maid-servant in garments of her own, and sent her to the sage in her stead; and the servant gave birth to a third son who was named Vidura. Thus were born three sons to the royal house at Hastinápur; namely, Dhritaráshtra, the blind; Pándu, the pale; and Vidura, the slave-born.

Vyása, the sage, requested to interfere.

Vyása becomes the father of Dhritaráshtra, the blind; Pándu, the pale; and Vidura, the slave-born.

Review of the foregoing legend of Raja Vichitra-vírya.

The foregoing legend of Raja Vichitra-vírya is one which demands a careful consideration. The opening portion of the story is simple and natural. The old Raja Sántanu was dead, and his youthful Ráni appears to have lived many years after him as a matron and Queen mother; and it may be remarked that neither in her case, nor in that of her

No allusion to Satí in connection with his mother or wives.

daughters-in-law, is there any reference to the rite of Satí, or that of the widow burning herself alive with the body of her deceased husband. Meantime Bhíshma, in faithful adherence to his vow, had placed the sons of Satyavatí in succession upon the throne of Hastinápur. The first was slain in a war with a neighbouring tribe of Hill men; and the survivor, although only a boy, was acknowledged to be Raja, whilst Bhíshma as guardian managed the affairs of the Raj. At length, the young Raja approached the age of manhood, and it became necessary to provide him with a wife or wives; a question which is always considered of the highest importance in Hindú households, where the marriages of sons or daughters are arranged by parents or guardians, without any reference to the inclinations of the parties concerned, who indeed are generally so young as to have no inclinations at all.

Importance of marriage in Hindú households.

The tradition of the marriage of Vichitra-vírya to the daughters of the Raja of Kási is, however, very obscure. It would seem from the story that Kási could have been at no great distance from Hastinápur; for Bhíshma drove there in his chariot, and drove back again in the same chariot with three young damsels. But Kási is the ancient name of Benares, and Benares is five hundred miles from Hastinápur as the crow flies. Moreover, in the Vedic age the Aryans could have advanced but a comparatively small way into the north-west quarter of India; and there is reason to believe that Hastinápur was an Aryan outpost in that direction; for it will be seen hereafter that when a branch of the family migrated southward from Hastinápur to the neighbourhood of Delhi, they

Suspicious character of the legend, that the wives of Vichitra-virya were the daughters of the Raja of Benares.

Distance of Benares from Hastinápur.

found an uncleared jungle. Indeed, the whole region south and west of Hastinápur appears, as far as the descendants of Bhárata are concerned, to be a land of fable, which was peopled by a wild and cannibal race known as Asuras and Rákshasas, who were a pre-Aryan race, and the natural enemies of the Aryans. Accordingly, the legend may be regarded as an instance, of which there are many in the Mahá Bhárata, of the extent to which the later manipulators of the traditions set geography at defiance for the sake of associating later Hindú dynasties with the famous heroes of the house of Bhárata. It is, however, difficult to say whether the Brahmanical compilers invented the story or merely borrowed it from the Buddhists; for though Benares is regarded by the Bráhmans as a holy city, it is still more famous in Buddhist tradition. Either way it is easy to conceive that the name of Kási has been substituted for that of a city very much nearer to Hastinápur; and by adopting this simple hypothesis, not only does the whole story become credible, but actually throws further light upon the condition of the ancient Kshatriyas in India.

Region south and west of Hastinápur, a land of fable in the Vedic period.

Probability that either the Buddhists or the Bráhmans interpolated the name.

The story that Bhíshma carried away the three daughters of a neighbouring Raja to become wives to his young half-brother is, however, in accordance with the rude manners of the Kshatriyas, although the statement that he conquered every Raja in the city borders on the miraculous, and is indeed an interpolation for which it is not difficult to assign a reason. The Kshatriyas were foreign settlers, surrounded on all sides by an aboriginal population; and they had probably brought with them but few women from their native homes beyond the Indus.

General credibility of the tradition.

Abduction of women by the Kshatriyas, sanctioned by Brahmanical law, as Rákshasa marriages.

Under such circumstances the abduction of women was to be expected, and indeed appears to have been very common. Even the Brahmanical law-makers were compelled to recognize such irregular proceedings, inserting, however, a clause that no one but a Kshatriya should be permitted to commit such an act, and that even a Kshatriya would not be justified unless he had first overcome all the friends and kinsmen of the damsel.[10] Accordingly, such being the law, the Brahmanical compilers were naturally anxious that Bhíshma should appear to comply with it, even at the expense of a miracle.

Mythical character of the legend respecting Ambá.

The next point worthy of attention is the story of Ambá, who pleaded that she could not marry Raja Vichitra-vírya because she had already been betrothed to the Raja of Salwa. In all probability this incident is a later myth, and may have been inserted at the same time that the name of Kási was apparently substituted for that of some city less distant from Hastinápur. It is scarcely compatible with the primitive manners of the patriarchal age, to which the story of the great war evidently belongs; and it is altogether foreign to the idea of a

[10] The Brahmanical law is thus stated by Manu:—"The seizure of a maiden by force from her house, while she weeps and calls for assistance, after her kinsmen and friends have been slain in battle, or wounded, and their houses broken open, is the marriage styled Rákshasa." Manu, III. 33. The name Rákshasa was indiscriminately applied to the aboriginal races, and consequently the origin of the custom thus sanctioned by Manu is to be found in the wars between the Aryans and aborigines. In another place it is said to be allowable only to the Kshaatriyas. Comp. Manu, III. 24, 41. The distinction between a Rákshasa and a Gandharva marriage will be readily perceived. In the former the woman was carried away by force; in the latter the connection was the result of mutual inclination.

The scarcity of women at Hastinápur, and the difficulty of forming suitable alliances, will be noticed hereafter, as this condition of society may have led to the institution of polyandry, and judging from one half-mythical legend seems to have led indirectly to the migration of a colony of Amazons to the Raj of Hastinápur.

Swayamvara, or privilege of free choice on the part of a daughter of a Raja. Indeed, the father of Ambá could scarcely have undertaken to celebrate her Swayamvara after he had betrothed her to another Raja. The legend, however, is worth preserving, as illustrating those later ideas of chastity and purity which still prevail amongst the Hindús.[11]

Ancient custom of begetting sons on the widow of a deceased kinsman.

But the most remarkable incident in connection with Raja Vichitra-vírya is the alleged intercourse between Vyása, the Bráhman sage, and the Raja's widows. The barbarous custom of raising up sons to a deceased kinsman certainly prevailed amongst the ancient Aryans. It is frequently enjoined in Brahmanical law, but is prohibited in the present age, and is especially prohibited to the three twice-born castes of Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, and Súdras.[12] A similar custom was also recognized by the Mosaic law, and indeed is common to many nations in which an undue stress has been laid upon the necessity for the birth of progeny who should perpetuate the family name. But the story that Vyása was the kinsman selected on the present occasion, and that he thus became the direct ancestor of the Kauravas and Pándavas who fought in the great war, is open to the gravest suspicion; and a brief consideration of the traditionary life of the sage, and the quarter of India in which he flourished, will suffice to prove that the story is a mythical interpolation of a later age.

Story that Vyása, the sage, became the progenitor of the Kauravas and Pándavas, proved to be a later myth.

[11] The country of Salwa has been identified with a part of Rajasthan, or Rajputana, at a considerable distance to the south-west of Hastinápur. (See Wilson's *note*, Vishnu Purana, p. 177.) The identification of the locality of the present myth can however be of little value.

[12] See Colebroke's Hindú law, Vol. II. p. 466, *et seq.* Traces of the ancient custom may still be found amongst the lower orders of Hindús.

Traditionary history of Vyása, the "arranger."

In the first place, it may be remarked that amongst all the Bráhman sages of antiquity who are famous for their learning, their austerities, and their miracles, few can be compared with the Rishi Vyása. The real history of this Rishi is, however, lost in a jungle of legend. He is said to have been the illegitimate son of a fish-girl, named Matsya, who was employed as a ferry-woman on one of the many small rivers which intersect eastern Bengal, and flow into the Brahmaputra. The native country of Vyása would thus correspond to the modern districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur, on the western bank of the Brahmaputra, and situated about a thousand miles from Hastinápur. His original name was Krishna-Dwaipáyana, but having become famous as the compiler of the Mahá Bhárata and the Vedas, he is widely known by the name of Vyása, or "the arranger." Other Bráhmans probably assisted in this gigantic undertaking, and went by the name of Vyása, and these Vyásas are the men who have falsified the Kshatriya traditions for the purpose of promulgating the tenets and exalting the pretensions of their tribe.[13]

Born of a fish-girl, named Matsya, in Eastern Bengal.

Identified with the Vyása, who compiled the Mahá Bhárata.

Efforts of the Brahmanical compilers to represent the heroes of the Mahá Bhárata as descendants of Bráhmans.

One of the principal objects of these Brahmanical compilers has been to persuade the Hindús that the famous heroes of the Mahá Bhárata were descended from the Bráhmans. It has already been seen that

[13] In the Vishnu Purána there is a list of twenty-eight Vyásas, ending with the great Muni Krishna-Dwaipáyana, who is popularly regarded as the author of the Mahá Bhárata, although, in fact, he is only the compiler or editor. The list, however, like all lists of names, genealogical or otherwise, which have been preserved in the sacred books of the Hindús, has been so garbled by the Bráhmans as to be useless for the purposes of history. The mythical character of the Puranic list of Vyásas is abundantly proved by the insertion of such names as Bráhma, Manu, Yama, and Indra! It should be added that these names are not merely patronymics which might possibly have been applied to different sages, but evidently refer to the gods themselves.

as the Kshatriyas boasted that they had descended from the Moon, the Bráhmans added to the myth by declaring that the Moon itself was begotten by a Bráhman Rishi. In the present instance they state that Matsya, the fish-girl of eastern Bengal, was identical with Satyavatí, the damsel who married Raja Sántanu at Hastinápur; that Satyavatí was the mother of Vyása by an illicit amour prior to her marriage; and that Vyása was the kinsman who was invited to raise up sons to the deceased Raja. The reason for this myth is obvious. Two of the sons who were subsequently born, namely, Dhritaráshtra and Pándu, ultimately became great Rajas, and the fathers of the men who fought in the great war. The supernatural details which the compilers have introduced for the purpose of rendering this myth acceptable to the Hindús, sufficiently betray the whole design. A fish is said to have carried away in its stomach the germ of a boy and girl, of whom a Raja was the father. Subsequently, the fish was caught by a fisherman, who found the boy and girl alive in its stomach, and sent the boy to the Raja, and brought up the girl as his own daughter. The girl grew up and was employed to ferry passengers across a river. She was very handsome, but had a very fishy smell; and a famous Rishi, named Parásara, fell in love with her, and induced her to yield to his desires by promising to remove the fishy smell, and to restore her virginity. The intercourse took place beneath a cloud of thick darkness, which the pious Rishi produced by a miracle in order to escape observation, and immediately afterwards the ferry-girl gave birth to a son, who, in a few moments, became a

Brahmanical myth that Vyása was the father of Dhritaráshtra, Pándu, and Vidura.

The myth proved to be an interpolation by the supernatural character of its details.

full-grown man. This son was Vyása, and he told his mother that he was going off to the jungle to spend his whole life in devotion; but that if ever she required his services, she had only to wish for his presence, upon which he would instantly appear before her. Accordingly, he went away, whilst his mother found that her fishy smell was changed to a delicious perfume, and that she was a virgin as before. Subsequently, she became the wife of Raja Sántanu under the circumstances described; and when Raja Vichitra-vírya died childless, she thought of Vyása, who immediately appeared and did her bidding.

Tenacity of Hindú belief in Brahmanical fables, when represented as religious mysteries, which cannot be doubted without impiety.

This preposterous myth is not only a manifest falsehood, but its whole tone is so widely different from that of the Kshatriya tradition, that it is difficult to understand how the two could have been possibly amalgamated. In the present place it has been shorn of many details still more extravagant and repulsive, but it may yet serve as a fair specimen of the Brahmanical fables which abound in the Mahá Bhárata. At the same time this fable, like every other which has found its way into the sacred books, is implicitly believed by the Hindús. The ignorance of the masses as regards the actual geography of India has enabled the Brahmanical compilers to ignore the vast tract of land, at least a thousand miles, which intervenes between the native country of Vyása and the city of Hastinápur; whilst the gross superstition of the people has induced them to give the most entire and unquestioning credence to any fable or miracle however monstrous, provided only that it be represented as a religious mystery, or as an article of faith which cannot be doubted without heinous sin. It must, however, be remarked

Frequent appearances of the mythical Vyása, in an abrupt or supernatural manner, throughout the Mahá Bhárata.

that having once foisted Vyása upon the royal house of Bhárata, the sage becomes ever afterwards an important personage in the Epic. He is introduced upon all occasions, and generally in a supernatural manner, for the purpose of giving wearisome advice of a Brahmanical character, or relating some tedious and unmeaning legend. Practically, however, his presence is never necessary to the story, and the Brahmanical interpolations respecting this sage can be generally eliminated from the Kshatriya tradition without any mutilation of the more authentic legend.[14]

Kshatriya tradition of the custom of raising up heirs to a deceased Raja, compared with the story of Ruth.

By rejecting the myth that Vyása was the son of the dowager Ráni, and accepting the hypothesis that some other kinsman performed the duty of raising up sons to the deceased Raja, the original Kshatriya tradition is at once perceptible, and moreover displays a truthfulness to human nature which throws a new light upon the barbarous custom with which it is connected. In the beautiful story of Ruth this barbarity does not appear, for her husband had been

[14] One circumstance may seem to militate against the hypothesis which refers Vyása to eastern Bengal, namely, that there are apparently two countries entitled Matsya, one being in the neighbourhood of Jeypur in Rajputana. The word Matsya, however, signifies "fish," and not only is eastern Bengal eminently a fish country, but local tradition is very strong in favour of its being the birth-place of Vyása. These conditions are not to be found in the neighbourhood of Jeypur.

It may, however, be remarked that the difficulty of approximating to truth in geographical identification is somewhat appalling. Local tradition will sometimes settle the question, but even that is frequently untrustworthy, for the local traditions of widely distant countries will often refer to one and the same event. Thus it will appear hereafter that in the case of a country named Virâta, local tradition is equally strong in Guzerat and Bengal; and the capital of this perplexing country is still called Matsya. As for the Pundits, I have found men who may be almost said to have the whole of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana by heart, and yet with the exception of a few prominent places they are utterly ignorant of the geography. I once put a few questions of the kind to a very learned Pundit through a third party, and his reply was most significant. "I am sixty-five years of age," he said, "and I was never asked for such information before."

dead a long time, and the poor widow was anxious to find favour in the eyes of Boaz. But for a widow to be compelled to receive a strange man whilst her grief is still fresh, is foreign to the womanly instinct; and this disinclination is exquisitely illustrated in the case of the two widows of the deceased Raja. The aspect of the kinsman is said to have excited their alarm,[15] and thus has given rise to the curious tradition of the birth of the blind Dhritaráshtra, the pale Pándu, and the slave-born Vidura.

Significant terror of the widows.

The fourth legend, which refers to Pándu and Dhritaráshtra, is chiefly of importance as bringing their respective sons upon the stage, who were known as the Pándavas and Kauravas, and who ultimately engaged in the famous war which forms the leading subject in the Mahá Bhárata. The narrative is as follows:—

4th, Legend of Pándu, and Dhritaráshtra.

When Dhritaráshtra, the blind, and Pándu, the pale, and Vidura, the slave-born, were yet boys, they were carefully educated by their uncle Bhíshma; and they were taught the rules of good conduct and polite manners, and practised in the use of arms. And Bhíshma ruled the Raj until they should be grown; but when they were of sufficient age, Dhritaráshtra was set aside because of his blindness, and Vidura because his mother was a slave. So the Raj fell to Pándu, and he was installed by Bhíshma as Raja of Bhárata.

Education of the three sons raised up to Vichitra-virya.

Pándu installed Raja of Bhárata.

After this Raja Pándu married two wives, and their names were Kuntí and Mádrí. Now Kuntí was the adopted daughter of Kunti-bhoja, a Raja who dwelt in the Vindhya mountains, but her real father was Sura, the grandfather of Krishna, and she became the wife of Pándu

Pándu marries two wives, Kuntí and Mádrí.

[15] In the Mahá Bhárata the terror of the women is said to have been excited at the gaunt aspect of the sage, who was wasted away with religious austerities. The details are related at great length and with much simplicity in the poem, but are not suited to the tastes of European readers.

because she had chosen him at her Swayamvara. But Mádrí was a lady of the Madra country, whom Bhíshma had bought with money and jewels from her brother Salya, who was the Raja of Madra.

Reign of Pándu.

This Raja Pándu was a mighty warrior, and he carried on many wars, and conquered many countries, so that in his time the Raj was as great and glorious as it was in the old time of Raja Bhárata.[16] But Raja Pándu was much given to hunting, and when some years had passed away, he went away with his two wives to the Himálaya mountains, and spent his time in hunting deer. And five sons were born to Pándu, namely, three sons by Kuntí, and two sons by Mádrí, and their names were Yudhishthira, Bhíma, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. And it so happened that one day Pándu shot his arrows at two deer; and the two deer were a Bráhman sage and his wife, who were accompanying together in that form; and the Bráhman assumed his proper shape and cursed Pándu that he should die in the embrace of one of his wives. Then Pándu took the vow of a Brahmachari, and gave all his wealth and goods to the Bráhmans, and lived apart from his wives; but one day he sought the company of his wife Mádrí, and he perished in her arms according to the curse of the sage.

Pándu devotes himself to hunting in the Himálayas.

Five sons of Pándu, known as the Pándavas.

Pándu cursed by a sage.

Takes the vow of celibacy.

His death.

When Raja Pándu had thus died, his sons built up a funeral pile on which to burn his dead body, and his wives disputed together as to which of them should burn herself alive upon the pile with the dead body of the Raja. And Kuntí said:—"I must burn myself with the Raja, for I was his first wife and his chief Rání." But Mádrí said:—"Not so, for I was his favourite wife, and he died out of love for me." And the Bráhmans who were there listened to all that the two women had to say, and they decided in

Mádrí, younger wife of Pándu, burns herself alive with her dead husband.

[16] Raja Pándu is said to have undertaken a great campaign, which would have extended his empire over all Hindustan, from the Punjab to Bengal, and from the slopes of the Himálayas to the Vindhya mountains. The Dasarnas, or people of the Ten Forts, cannot be identified, though Professor H. H. Wilson thinks that they may be found in the neighbourhood of Chattisgurh in the Central Provinces (see Wilson's *note*, Vishnu Purána, p. 186). Magadhá corresponds to the modern Bahar. Mithila is the modern Tirhút, famous as the birth-place of Sitá, the wife of Ráma.

favour of Mádrí. So Mádrí laid herself upon the pile by the side of her dead husband, and perished in the fire.

Meantime the blind Dhritaráshtra had reigned over the Raj of Bhárata, and he sent messengers to the Raja of Gándhára, to ask for his daughter Gándhári in marriage. And the Raja of Gándhára betrothed his daughter to Dhritaráshtra; and when the damsel heard that she was betrothed to a blind husband, she tied a handkerchief round her eyes, so that she might be like unto her lord. And Gándhári was conducted to the city of Hastináp ur by her brother Sakuni, and married to Raja Dhritaráshtra, according to the ordinance; and thenceforward she ever remained blindfold in the presence of her husband Dhritaráshtra. And Gándhári gave birth to a family of sons, who were named Kauravas after their ancestor Kuru, to distinguish them from the Pándavas or sons of Pándu. And the eldest of her sons was named Duryodhana, and the chief among his brethren was Duhsásana.

Reign of the blind Dhritaráshtra.

Marries Gándhári.

Story of Gándhári blindfolding herself.

Sons of Dhritaráshtra and Gándhári, known as the Kauravas.

Now when Mádrí had burnt herself with the dead body of Raja Pándu, Kuntí, the first wife, set out to return to the city of Hastináp ur, accompanied by the five sons of the deceased Raja. And Kuntí and the five Pándavas arrived at the palace, and told the blind Raja Dhritaráshtra how his brother Pándu had perished in the jungle. And Raja Dhritaráshtra wept much at hearing of the death of his brother, and duly performed the funeral rites of bathing and offering oblations of water to the soul of the deceased Pándu. And he received his sister-in-law Kuntí and the five Pándavas with much affection, and they took up their abode in his palace along with Gándhári and the Kauravas.

Kuntí arrives at Hastináp ur with the five sons of Pándu.

The Pándavas dwelt in the palace with the Kauravas.

The foregoing legend demands some consideration. Pándu is said to have obtained the Raj, because his elder brother was blind, and his younger brother was the son of a slave girl, a Súdra. But it seems difficult to understand why the younger brother should have been taken into consideration. The white complexion of Pándu was however re-

Review of the foregoing legend of Pándu and Dhritaráshtra.

Pándu, probably a leper.

garded as a blemish, and was probably indicative of leprosy. Accordingly it may be inferred that Pándu would have been excluded like Dhritaráshtra, had it not so happened that Vidura was begotten upon a slave.

Suspicious details respecting Pándu's marriages.

Kunti, the daughter of the Raja of the Bhojas in the Dekhan.

The marriages of Pándu are also deserving of notice. Kuntí was his first and most celebrated wife, but her origin is involved in some obscurity. She is said to have been the daughter of Kunti-bhoja, a Chieftain in the Vindhya mountains, and to have chosen Pándu for her husband at her Swayamvara. The statement as regards her birth seems not altogether improbable. The Bhojas, of whom her father was Chieftain, were a rude race who appear to have preceded the Rajputs and to have occupied the Vindhya mountains in the Malwa country,[17] and it is just possible that Pándu obtained a wife from such a family. But the statement that Kuntí chose Pándu at her Swayamvara is open to suspicion, for it seems scarcely possible that she should of her own accord have chosen a man for her husband who was white complexioned, or who, in other words, presented the appearance of a leper. But another statement is added which is still more questionable. She is said to have been the daughter, not of Kunti-bhoja, but of a Chieftain named Sura, who belonged to the Yádava tribe; and it is added that Sura and Kunti-bhoja were friends, and that the latter was childless, and therefore Sura presented him with Kuntí, whilst still an infant, to bring up as his own daughter.

Myth that Kunti was the daughter of Sura, the grandfather of Krishna.

Origin of the myth.

Now Sura was the grandfather of the celebrated

[17] Comp. Wilson's *note* to Vishnu Purána, pp. 186, 418. The tribe of Bhojas are said to be still represented by the Dhar Rajas. Relics of the tribe may also be found in western Bahar.

Krishna, and the improbable story of his giving his infant daughter to the Bhoja chieftain seems to be a myth, introduced for the purpose of connecting the family of Krishna with that of the heroes of the Mahá Bhárata. The extraordinary history of Krishna both as a warrior and a god will form the subject of consideration hereafter; but it may be generally stated that his worship was adopted by the Bráhmans, and that the Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata especially inculcated the worship of Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu. Accordingly throughout the Mahá Bhárata they have endeavoured to combine as far as possible the traditionary history of Krishna with that of the heroes who fought in the great war, much in the same manner as they have brought in the mythical history of Vyása. There is however a difference between the two attempts which is highly significant. The traditions of Krishna are to a great extent historical, and true to human nature, but those relating to Vyása are mythical inventions of a supernatural character. The result is that whilst it is easy to eliminate the myths referring to Vyása, it is difficult to separate the traditions of Krishna from those of Bhárata; and thus, whilst it is impossible to avoid the conviction that there is no real connection between the two series, it is better, where absolute proof is not forthcoming, to permit the connection to stand.

Aim of the Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata to promulgate the worship of Krishna, and to connect the traditions of Krishna with those of the Bhárata family.

Contrast between the historical traditions of Krishna and the mythical fables respecting Vyása.

The story of the marriage of Pándu to his second wife Mádrí is perhaps less open to suspicion. Madra is the ancient name for Bhootan, and there seems some reason for believing that Mádrí belonged to one of the mountain tribes occupying the southern slopes of the Himálayas, but probably much further

Mádrí, the sister of a Raja of Madra, on the southern slope of the Himálayas.

to the westward than the country of Bhootan. She was purchased with money and jewels from her brother Salya, who is described as the Raja of Madra; and the customs attributed to the people of his country are precisely of that depraved character which prevails to this day amongst the tribes of the Himálayas. They indulged in promiscuous intercourse without regard to relationship. They would eat flesh and drink wine until they were drunk, and then would dance together in a medley. If victorious in a battle they never gave quarter to the enemy; but if they were defeated they made over their wives and children to the conquerors without shame or concern.[18]

Barbarous customs of the people of Madra.

Difficulty as regards the birth both of Kunti and Mádri.

The inferences to be drawn from the marriages of Pándu are somewhat vague and unsatisfactory. The statement that he obtained one wife from the Vindhya mountains, and another from Bhootan, is open to suspicion; whilst the further statement that Kuntí was the real daughter of Sura, and only the adopted daughter of Kunti-bhoja, is apparently mythical.[19] The compilers of the Mahá Bhárata have so frequently tampered with the text for the purpose of associating Krishna or his family with that of the Pándavas, that it is difficult to accept statements which have that object in view. For the

[18] See the charges brought by Karna against Salya on the seventeenth day of the great war.

[19] The only circumstances under which female adoption is recognized by the Hindús is in the case of prostitutes and dancing girls, who are permitted to adopt daughters for the purpose of bringing them up to their own profession.

The traditions respecting Krishna and his family have been so extensively garbled that it is difficult to arrive at the facts. Krishna's real parents are said to have been Vasudeva, a chief of the Yádavas, and Devakí, a damsel of the royal family of the Bhojas, reigning at Mathurá; whilst his apparent parents were Nanda and Yasodá, a cowherd and cowherdess dwelling at Gokula. It will be seen hereafter that the reverse is probably the truth; that he was really the son of a cowherd, but that his biographers invented an absurd and impossible myth for the purpose of assigning to him a nobler parentage.

present, therefore, the parentage of Kuntí must be regarded as altogether doubtful.

Mythical account of the death of Raja Pándu in the jungle.

The history of Pándu's life in the jungle is filled with mythical details, which are introduced for the sole purpose of ascribing supernatural powers to a Bráhman's curse. He is said to have departed with his two wives to the southern slope of the Himálayas for the sake of indulging his passion for hunting; but in all probability he retired on account of his leprosy.[20] The remaining details of his life might well be passed over in silence. The wild idea of a sage taking the form of a deer, and the ostentatious statement that Pándu gave all his property to the Bráhmans, are equally unworthy of criticism. But the statement that Mádrí perished with Pándu upon the funeral pile demands some consideration. The original idea of Satí was simply that of sending a favourite wife to keep company with her husband after death. When the ancient Scythians buried a king, they strangled one of his concubines, and buried her with him, together with his cup-bearer, cook, groom, waiting-man, messenger, and favourite horses.[21] Amongst the Thracians there existed a still more significant custom. Every Thracian had several wives, and whenever a man died, a sharp

Absurd details beneath criticism.

Self-sacrifice of Mádrí on the funeral pile of her husband Pándu.

Original idea of Satí amongst the Scythians.

Thracian custom of choosing the best-beloved wife.

[20] A curious Buddhist legend respecting the retirement of both a Princess and a Raja on account of leprosy is to be found in the Mahawansi. A Princess named Priya in the city of Kapila was seized with white leprosy, and was taken to a distant jungle, and placed in a large cave where she was supplied with fire, fuel, and all kinds of food. At the same time Rámа, Raja of Benares, was seized with the same disorder, and abandoned his Raj, and retired to the same jungle. Subsequently he found a remedy in the root, leaves, fruit, and bark of a certain tree, and his body became as pure as gold. Ultimately he fell in with Priya, cured her leprosy, and married her, and they resided in the city of Koli.

[21] Herodotus, IV. 71. The same idea is brought forward in the story of the adventures of the Pándavas during the thirteenth year of their exile in the city of Virata, which will appear further on.

contest ensued between his wives as to which of them he loved the best. On such an occasion a number of men and women assembled to hear the dispute, and finally settle the question; and when the best-beloved woman had been chosen, she received the praises of all present, and was then slain over the grave by her next of kin, and buried with her husband, whilst all the others are said to have been sorely grieved at not being thought worthy to follow their husbands.[22] The legend of the Satí of Mádrí is precisely of this character. Mádrí disputes the honour with Kuntí, and urges the circumstances of her husband's death as a proof that she was the best-beloved, after which she sacrificed herself upon the funeral pile.[23] How this extraordinary rite became sublimed into a religious duty will be considered hereafter.

Similarity between the Satí of Mádrí and the Thracian custom.

As regards the birth of the five sons of Pán du an extraordinary myth has been inserted in the Mahá Bhárata, which has not been incorporated in the foregoing text, but which may be briefly in-

Myth that the Pándavas were directly begotten by the gods.

[22] Herodotus, V. 5.

[23] The extraordinary self-sacrifice of Mádrí is not without its parallel in modern times. In 1862, a horrible case occurred in Rajputana. A wandering Bhat and beggar died in a village at Jodhpur. His wife, aged twenty-two, was not with him at the time, but arrived at the village one evening six days afterwards, accompanied by her husband's brother. She then learned for the first time that her husband was dead, and at once declared her intention of becoming Satí; but she is said to have been dissuaded by her husband's relations, and to have retired for the night, having apparently abandoned the idea. In the night her brother-in-law heard her moving, and saw that she was collecting wood for a funeral pile. Accordingly he assisted her, and when the pile was finished the poor woman seated herself upon it, whilst her brother-in-law set it on fire. At early dawn the people of the village saw the blaze, and came up to see what was the matter, when they found that the woman had burnt herself to death upon the pile.

The legend, however, respecting the Satí of Mádrí is not altogether without suspicion, inasmuch as it is the only instance recorded in connection with the family of Bhárata. Neither the widow of Santanu nor the widows of Vichitravírya perished upon the funeral pile.

dicated here. It is said that Pándu never had any children, and that when he took the vows of celibacy he permitted his two wives to invite the gods to their embraces. Accordingly Kuntí became the mother of Yudhishthira by Dharma, or personified virtue; of Bhíma, by Váyu, the god of wind; and of Arjuna, by Indra, the sovereign of the gods. In like manner, Mádrí became the mother of Nakula and Sahadeva by the two Aswins. This myth furnishes a valuable illustration of the interpolating process which has been carried on by the compilers of the Mahá Bhárata; a process which has hitherto been unimpeached by the Hindús, although replete with senseless contradictions. Thus in the more mythical portions of the Mahá Bhárata, the sage Vyása constantly appears as the grandfather and protector of the Pándavas, whilst the Pándavas occasionally assume to be the sons of the gods specified. At the same time, in the more authentic portions the Pándavas are invariably alluded to as the undoubted sons of Pándu.

Palpable contradictions in the mythical portions of the Mahá Bhárata.

The marriage of Dhritaráshtra and Gándhári is significant from a totally different point of view. Gándhári came from the Gándhára country, and the history of the Gandharians is somewhat remarkable. They were a cognate race with the Kshatriyas, and fought in the army of Xerxes (B.C. 480) armed with bows of cane and short spears, and were associated with the Indians.[24] Originally they appear to have occupied Cabul on the upper Indus, but about the fifth or sixth century of the Christian era they migrated to the westward, where their

Significance of the marriage of Dhritaráshtra and Gándhári.

The Gandharians a famous people, whose name is still preserved in Kandahar.

[24] Herodotus, VII. 64, 66.

name is still preserved in the modern province of Kandahar.[25] Dhritaráshtra, therefore, does not appear to have intermarried, like his successors, with the women of Hindústan; but he seems to have sent for a wife from the country of his ancestors, in the same way that Isáac and Jacob sought for wives in the family of Nahor. The result was that he did not indulge in polygamy; and it will be seen hereafter that Gándhári held a position of equality with her husband, which corresponded with the Aryan idea of marriage.[26] The sons of Dhritaráshtra and Gándhári were called Kauravas after their ancestor Kuru, the son of Hastin; and it is by this term that they are generally distinguished from the Pándavas, or sons of Pándu.[27]

Monogamy of Dhritaráshtra as opposed to the polygamy of his predecessors.

[25] See Professor Rawlinson's learned and valuable Essáy on the obscure tribes contained within the empire of Xerxes. Rawlinson's edition of Herodotus, Vol. IV. p. 175.

[26] Dhritaráshtra is said to have had another son, named Yuyutsu, by a woman of the Vaisya caste; but there is every reason to believe that the existence of Yuyutsu is purely mythical. According to the tradition all the sons of Dhritaráshtra were killed in the great war; and the repugnance felt at the idea that he should die without a son seems to have led to the introduction of Yuyutsu. The point will be further noticed hereafter.

[27] Another Brahmanical myth of the usual type has been inserted in this part of the Kshatriya tradition, for the sake of glorifying the miraculous powers of that imaginary and unreal personage, the sage Vyása. Gándhári is said to have owed the existence of her family to the interposition of this sage. Having on one occasion hospitably entertained Vyása, he offered her a boon, upon which she requested that she might become the mother of a hundred sons. Accordingly after two years' gestation, she produced a lump of flesh, which Vyása divided into a hundred and one pieces, and placed in as many jars, and the sons were ultimately born from the jars!

CHAPTER II.

EARLY FEUDS AT HASTINÁPUR.

HAVING thus disposed of the group of legends which refer to the ancestors of the Kauravas and Pándavas, it will be necessary to take into consideration those which are connected with the early rivalry which broke out between the sons of Dhritaráshtra and the sons of Pándu, and which led to the first exile of the Pándavas. This second series of legends, although somewhat interlarded with mythical matter, is of considerable historical value. It throws light upon the so-called education which prevailed in the Vedic age. It illustrates the relations which subsisted between the Aryan settlers and the original inhabitants. It also comprises a curious account of an exhibition of arms, which was evidently the origin of the later tournament. The main incidents of this portion of the narrative may be thus indicated.

Historical value of the legends referring to the early rivalry between the Kauravas and Pándavas.

Main incidents.

1st, Jealousies between the Kauravas and Pándavas, and attempt of Duryodhana to take the life of Bhíma.

2nd, Education of the Kauravas and Pándavas by Drona.

3rd, Legend of the son of the Bhíl Raja, and his skill in archery.

4th, Exhibition of arms at Hastinápur.
5th, Legend of the birth of Karna.
6th, War against Drupada, Raja of Panchála.
7th, Rivalry between Yudhishthira and Duryodhana for the post of Yuvaraja.

1st, Jealousies between the Kauravas and Pándavas.

The narrative of the jealousies between the Kauravas and Pándavas, and the attempt of Duryodhana to take the life of Bhíma, may now be related as follows:—

Attempt of Duryodhana to take the life of Bhíma.

After this the Kauravas and the Pándavas were brought up together in the old palace at Hastinápur, and they sported together, and were taught together, without any favour being shown to any one more than to the others; but from the days of their early youth the sons of Dhritaráshtra were ever jealous of the sons of Pándu. Now about this time Duryodhana, who was the eldest of the Kauravas, became very jealous of the strength of Bhíma, and he resolved to work evil against Bhíma. And on a certain day Duryodhana put poison into Bhíma's food, and when Bhíma had eaten he was seized with a deep sleep, so that he seemed like one who is dead. Then Duryodhana lifted him up, and carried him to the river Ganges, and threw him into the stream; and Bhíma sank in the deep waters, but he was not drowned, for he descended into the great city of serpents which is underneath the earth. And the serpents recovered him from the poison, and gave him a drink which made him as strong as ten thousand serpents. And Bhíma took leave and returned to the city of Hastinápur, and he had henceforth great strength, and was the mightiest of the mighty.

Bhíma's escape to the city of Serpents.

Bhíma's great strength.

Review of the foregoing legend.

Mythical character of the story of Bhíma's escape from Duryodhana.

The foregoing legend presents a very mythical appearance. In the first place, it may be remarked that the bards of the Mahá Bhárata exhibit from the first a palpable leaning towards the Pándavas, and were quite capable of inventing a myth for the sake of blackening the character of the opposite party.

Secondly, the escape of Bhíma from the bottom of a river to the city of serpents is unquestionably mythical, and belongs to that group of legends which confounded real serpents with a tribe of Scythians named Nágas, and which will be more fully discussed hereafter.

2nd, Education of the Kauravas and Pándavas by Drona.

The next incident, namely, the education of the Kauravas and Pándavas, is more valuable, and may be related as follows :—

Arrival of Drona at Hastinápur.

Some time after this a famous Bráhman preceptor, named Drona, who had cause of quarrel with the neighbouring Raja of Panchála, arrived at the city of Hastinápur. And Bhíshma rejoiced to see Drona, and made him very welcome, and requested him to instruct the Kauravas and Pándavas in arms and sciences. And Drona said :—"This I will do, but when the young men are fully practised in the use of arms, they must fight for me against the Raja of Panchála." So Bhíshma agreed, and Drona took up his abode in Hastinápur; and Bhíshma gave Drona his half-sister in marriage. And Drona took great pains in teaching all the young men, but he especially delighted in teaching the Pándavas. To Yudhishthira he imparted the use of the spear, but that young Prince became more renowned for wisdom and goodness than for deeds of arms. To Arjuna he taught the use of the bow, and Arjuna became the most famous archer of his time. To Bhíma he taught the use of the club, for Bhíma was a young man of great appetite and enormous strength, and could wield the club right lustily. To Nakula he taught the whole art of taming and managing horses, and to Sahadeva he taught the use of the sword and a perfect knowledge of astronomy. And Drona instructed the Kauravas in like manner, as well as his own son Aswattháma. But of all his pupils the most beloved was Arjuna, for he was the most perfect of all; and thus whilst Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, was jealous of all the Pándavas, he was the most jealous of Arjuna.

Drona educates the Princes, on condition that they afterwards fight the Raja of Panchála.

Marriage of Drona.

Practice in the use of the spear, club, bow, and sword.

Taming horses.

Astronomy.

Duryodhana's jealousy of Arjuna.

Review of the foregoing account of the education of the Kauravas and Pándavas.

The education of the Kauravas and Pándavas is very briefly indicated in the foregoing legend; but it will appear hereafter that they followed other pursuits of a primitive character, such as might have been expected amongst a fighting community in ancient times. Thus it will be seen that they practised wrestling, fighting with fists, throwing stones, and casting a noose. They also went out every three years into the pastures to mark all the calves which had been born during the interval, and to re-mark all the other cattle. The astronomy that was taught was no doubt of a practical character; and was either to enable the young men to find their way through a jungle in the night-time, or else to assist them in calculating nativities, or really to impart to them some primitive knowledge of the movements of the heavenly bodies, and the recurrence of months, seasons, and years.

Wrestling. Pugilism. Stone throwing. Casting the noose. Marking cattle every three years.

Practical astronomy.

Question of whether Drona was a Bráhman or a Kshatriya.

An interesting circumstance is connected with the education of the young men, namely, the selection of a tutor or preceptor, which opens up a curious question as to whether Drona was a Bráhman or a Kshatriya. In the previous generation the venerable Bhíshma had undertaken the education of the fathers, but from causes not stated he appears to have taken no part in the tuition of the sons. This duty is said to have been fulfilled by an able and veteran warrior named Drona, who was engaged for the purpose, and who was retained in the household by being married to a damsel of the family named Kripá, who was apparently the daughter of old Raja Sántanu by a slave girl. He appears to have been treated, both by his pupils and the Chieftains of the house, as an experienced and honoured veteran.

Marriage of Drona to a lady of the family of Bhárata.

One slight difficulty occurs in the narrative, which is, however, capable of explanation. Drona had a son named Aswatthâma, whom he educated together with the Kauravas and Pándavas. From this statement it must be inferred that Drona married Kripá some years before taking upon himself the office of instructor; for, otherwise, Aswatthâma would have been an infant in arms when the Kauravas and Pándavas were almost men.

Drona's son, Aswatthâma, educated with the Kauravas and Pándavas.

It will subsequently be seen that Drona is occasionally represented as a family priest as well as an instructor in the use of arms; that he offered up prayers to the gods on public occasions; and that he was treated by his pupils with a reverence approaching the divine homage which is due to a religious Bráhman preceptor, rather than with the ordinary respect which would be paid by young men to an elder. This circumstance is deserving of some consideration. It seems certain that Drona was a warrior and a Kshatriya. He occupied the same position as regards the sons of Dhritaráshtra and Pándu which Bhíshma occupied as regards their fathers, and Bhíshma was unquestionably a Kshatriya. On the other hand, the Bráhmans were essentially priests, and are never represented as warriors, excepting in some wildly supernatural legends, which are utterly unworthy of credence. The Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata, however, appear to have resolved on representing Drona as a Brahmanical priest and preceptor, corresponding to the Purohita, or family priest, who occupies so important a position in the modern social system of the Hindús. Accordingly, they have introduced an absurd story respecting his birth, which consists

Efforts of the Brahmanical compilers to represent Drona as a Bráhman, who officiated as Purohita, or family priest.

wholly of supernatural details of the character already indicated, and which in itself is utterly devoid of interest, excepting on account of the object for which it has been inserted, namely, that of representing Drona as a Bráhman.[1]

Distinction between the two classes of Bráhmans; viz. (1.) The Purohita, or family priest. (2.) The Guru, or great ecclesiastical head.

Here it may be convenient to point out the distinction between two classes of Brahmanical

[1] These Brahmanical myths, when closely intertwined with the Kshatriya traditions, and introduced for the sole purpose of concealing the real truth, are a decided difficulty to the historian. He may be able to untwine the one from the other, and even to explain the process by which he has separated the truth from the fable, but he is more or less restrained by the character of the supernatural details, which can rarely be introduced without a shock to modern delicacy. At the same time, the reader can be scarcely expected to accept the judgment of a historian without some proofs of its being based upon a sufficient data; and accordingly the task of separating truth from fable in the present instance must be attempted.

The myth is as follows:—Drona was the son of a famous Bráhman sage, named Bharadwája; the germ from which he sprung having escaped from the sage whilst inflamed at the sight of a celestial nymph. Drupada, Raja of Panchála, was born under similar circumstances of a Raja named Prishata, and was educated together with Drona by the sage Bharadwája. Subsequently, as mentioned in the text, Drona had a feud against Drupada, because when Drupada succeeded his father in the Raj, he did not treat his old fellow-pupil with kindness and respect; but rather taunted him with the inferiority of his position as a mendicant Bráhman when compared with that of a Kshatriya or Raja. Hence Drona entered the service of Mahâraja Dhritarâshtra for the very purpose of obtaining revenge against Drupada.

The truth may probably be as follows:—The association of Drona and Drupada, both as regards the similarity of their births and their being educated together by the same sage, very likely had a natural basis, and in all probability that basis was family relationship. Moreover, it is distinctly stated that in their youth they had agreed to divide the Raj between them; and Drona says plainly that had Drupada adhered to this agreement there would have been no war. This simple hypothesis at once clears away every difficulty. Drupada and Drona were probably brothers. The former succeeds to the Raj of Panchála, whilst Drona goes into exile; and Drona finally marries a lady of the house of Bhárata, and undertakes the education of the Kauravas and Pándavas, on condition that they ultimately undertake an expedition against Drupada. It will be seen, hereafter, that the result of the expedition was that the Raj of Panchála was divided, the half going to Drona whilst the remaining half was left with Drupada.

The Brahmanical compilers also insert another myth, to the effect that Kripá the wife of Drona, was born from a Bráhman named Gautama, the son of Gotama, in the same unnatural manner as her husband had been. The object of this myth is obvious. Having represented Drona to be a Bráhman, it was necessary that his wife should be born of a Bráhman also. It may be added that Kripá had a brother named Kripa.

dignitaries, which, according to Brahmanical ideas, have existed from time immemorial; inasmuch as a clear perception of these two priestly orders will enable the historian to explain with greater clearness the character and scope of some of the most important of the Brahmanical interpolations. The great mass of Bráhmans may be regarded as mendicant priests. They are feasted on occasions of births, marriages, deaths, and other periods of ceremony and festival; and large gifts are distributed amongst them in times of sorrow and trouble, as well as in times of joy. Again, every Bráhman who is acquainted with the different formulas of worship, may become an officiating priest, and receive pay accordingly. But there are two special Brahmanical orders, who form an essential part of the framework of Hindú society, and who for ages have effectually garrisoned and defended the social system against any hostile attack, whether of foreign religions from without or of heresies from within. These two orders are the Purohita, or family priest; and the Guru, or great ecclesiastical head. In relative position they correspond generally to that of Chaplains and Bishops in Christian communities; excepting that the offices, like those of all Hindú institutions, are hereditary; and that sons, real or adopted, have been known to succeed their fathers as Purohitas or Gurus for many generations. Occasionally a Hindú family becomes divided, and the new branch entertains a new Purohita. In like manner also a Bráhman of great wisdom, or austerities, or endowed with a powerful eloquence, or invested by the popular voice with supernatural powers, suddenly appears before the world as a new

Generally correspond to the Chaplains and Bishops of Christian communities, excepting that the offices are hereditary.

and famous Guru, surrounded by a band of disciples or followers, and ultimately succeeds in founding a new sect, of which he is the spiritual head.

Duties of the Purohita, as a priest of the family, an instructor in the Sástras, a confidential adviser, and an envoy.

The Purohita is essentially a family priest and a religious preceptor. Amongst the poorer classes he may officiate for very many families, in which case he employs assistants, and gives them a stipulated share of the gifts and other perquisites which he may receive. But amongst the richer classes, the duties of a Purohita are confined to a single family, and under such circumstances his influence becomes paramount in the household. He performs all the necessary religious rites and ceremonies for the members of the family, and imparts religious instruction from the sacred books. At the same time, he is the repository of all the family secrets, and the confidential and authoritative counsellor in all times of doubt and difficulty. He is also frequently engaged in more secular matters, such as the settlement of disputes; and in modern times a Hindú Zemindar or Raja has occasionally employed his Purohita as an ambassador or envoy.

The Guru, or great head of the sect.

The Guru holds a still higher position in the Brahmanical hierarchy. He is the head of the religious sect to which the family may belong; and

His ecclesiastical visitations.

he is generally engaged in extensive ecclesiastical visitations or tours, accompanied by a band of disciples who occasionally act as assistant Gurus. During his progress he levies such contributions as he may be able to impose upon the families belonging to his sect; he likewise confirms the younger Hindús, who have attained a suitable age, by a number of ceremonies which need not be repeated here. Ac-

His spiritual powers.

cording to the popular belief he is entitled to divine

worship, for he can work miracles and forgive sins. His benedictions can bring down health, wealth, and long life; whilst his curses can burn up armies, remove mountains, change the courses of rivers, or hurl Mahárajas from their thrones. By virtue of these supposed spiritual powers he exercises very large temporal powers. He can excommunicate an offender from his family, as well as from his sect or caste; and he alone can restore the degraded wretch, who otherwise is doomed to a life of utter solitude and despair.

His temporal powers.

Amongst the ancient Kshatriyas to whom the Mahá Bhárata refers, there may possibly have been Purohitas, but there certainly were no Gurus. It is not wholly impossible that Drona, whilst instructing the Kauravas and Pándavas in the use of arms, may have acted as a family priest.[2] But the ancient representatives of the modern Gurus were mythical Rishis, or sages, of whom Vyása is pre-eminently the type; and their presence is not only never necessary to the story, but is invariably foisted on to the Kshatriya tradition by some supernatural details which sufficiently betray the nature and object of

Question of whether the family priest, or Purohita, existed amongst the ancient Kshatriyas.

Question of Gurus amongst the ancient Kshatriyas, disproved by the mythic character of the traditions respecting them.

[2] The following texts in the Aitareya Bráhmanam indicate not only that it was the duty of a Raja to engage a Purohita, but that the ancient Rajas were sometimes disinclined to engage a Purohita.

"Now about the office of a Purohita. The gods do not eat the food offered by a Raja who has no Purohita. Thence the Raja, even when not intending to bring a sacrifice, should appoint a Bráhman to the office of Purohita.

"This Agni Vaisvanara, who is the Purohita, is possessed of five destructive powers. With them he surrounds the Raja for his defence, just as the sea surrounds the earth. The empire of such a ruler (Arya) will be safe. Neither will he die before the expiration of the full life term (100 years); but live up to his old age, and enjoy the full term apportioned for his life."—Haug's translation, Vol. II. pp. 528, 530.

Dr Haug is of opinion that the institution of a Purohita, as a political functionary as well as a house-priest, may be traced back to the remotest times. See introduction to the Aitareya Bráhmanam, p. 67. His opinion is valuable, but his proofs are inconclusive.

the interpolation. Moreover it must always be borne in mind that the later Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata were undoubtedly Gurus, and that the reciters or readers of the Mahá Bhárata are to this day either family priests, or Bráhmans engaged for the purpose. Consequently every opportunity has been afforded to the Bráhmans for carrying out their interested purpose of exalting their own caste in the eyes of the community at large.

Garbling of the Mahá Bhárata by the Purohitas and Gurus.

But to proceed with the traditionary history of the great war of Bhárata. During the period that Drona was instructing the Kauravas and Pándavas in the use of arms, an incident occurred which throws an unexpected light upon the supremacy exercised by the Kshatriya settlers in the Raj of Bhárata over the aboriginal populations in their neighbourhood. Amongst all the Hill tribes which appear to represent the more ancient inhabitants of India, and which have preserved their rude habits and manners to the present day, there are none more remarkable than the Bheels or Bhíls. These people still occupy the hill tracts of Rajputana and central India, and in ancient times seem to have dwelt in much the same localities; having Rajas or Chieftains of their own, but acknowledging or dreading the supremacy of the Kshatriyas. In the Mahá Bhárata they appear to the south of the Jumná, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Raj of Bhárata; whilst in the Rámáyana they make their appearance further to the east, near the junction of the Jumná and Ganges. To this day the Bhíls are cattle-lifters, highway robbers, hunters like Nimrod and Esau, capable of almost any outrage, yet imbued with a sense of truth and honour strangely at contrast with

3rd. Legend of the son of the Bhíl Raja. Illustrative of the supremacy exercised by the Aryan tribes over their aboriginal neighbours.

Ancient and modern condition of the Bhils.

their external character. At the same time, they are yielding so perceptibly to the personal influence of British administrators, and the advancing tide of British civilization, that within a few generations they will be probably converted into peaceful and industrious men.

The legend of the son of the Raja of the Bhíls may now be related as follows:— The legend.

When the Kauravas and Pándavas were well practised in the use of arms, so that men could see their strength and skill, the fame of Drona became noised abroad, and many sons of Rajas flocked to the city of Hastinápur to take lessons from so great a preceptor. And it came to pass that the son of the Raja of the Bhíls came to Hastinápur, and prostrated himself at the feet of Drona, and prayed that he might be taught to shoot with the bow. But Drona refused to teach the Bhíl, saying:—"The Bhíls are a race of highwaymen and cattle-lifters, and it would be a sin to teach them the use of weapons." At these words, the son of the Bhíl Raja returned to his own country, but he was very sorrowful, for he had greatly desired that Drona should teach him the use of the bow.

Flocking of sons of Rajas to Hastinápur to learn archery from Drona.

Arrival of the son of the Bhíl Raja.

Drona refuses to teach the Bhíl.

Sorrow of the Bhíl.

After this, the son of the Bhíl Raja made a clay image of Drona, and he set it up, and performed worship before it; and he practised the use of the bow in the presence of the clay image. And after many days the young man acquired great skill in archery by virtue of the clay image, and the fame of his shooting was spread abroad on all sides, and great complaint was made to Drona, that by his means the Bhíl had become a mighty archer. So Drona went to the Bhíl country, accompanied by all the young men of the royal house of Hastinápur; and they beheld the shooting of the Bhíl, and saw that it was very good. And Drona determined to spoil the archery of the Bhíl, and he called to him and commanded him to cut off the forefinger of his right hand. And the Bhíl fell down and worshipped Drona,

The Bhíl sets up a clay image of Drona, and learns archery by practising before the image.

Drona contemplates spoiling the Bhíl's archery, but is restrained by his submission.

and prepared to do as he had been commanded; but the heart of Drona was touched by the obedience of the Bhíl, and he ordered him to stay his hand and leave his forefinger whole. But Drona still feared lest the Bhíl should become too powerful an archer; and he bound him over by a solemn oath never more to shoot with his forefinger, but to draw his arrow through his middle fingers only; and this became the custom amongst the Bhíls, and they shoot the bow with their middle finger until this day.

Review of the foregoing tradition. Religious worship paid in modern times to favourite heroes.

The foregoing significant tradition bears generally the stamp of truth. The devotion which is implanted in the breasts of Indian soldiery at the deeds of some daring hero, will frequently lead them to pay divine honours to his image; and it is notorious that the gallant John Nicholson was worshipped by his men as a demi-god, although with a soldier's simplicity he punished all who engaged in such unhallowed rites. The display of feeling on the part of the Kshatriyas at finding that the Bhíl was as good an archer as themselves, would be shared by any band of foreign settlers who were called upon to maintain an ascendancy over a native population by their superior skill in warfare. The cruel intention of Drona to cut off the forefinger of the Bhíl may be accepted as an illustration of the barbarous character of the age. The final statement, however, that the Bhíl obeyed the command of Drona, and that the whole tribe adopted the custom of shooting with their middle fingers only, may be fairly questioned. It is scarcely in accordance with human nature that a tribe so numerous as the Bhíls should have obeyed a law so detrimental to their efficiency in war, and one which no enemy could have enforced. Moreover, in the present day

Cause of the alarm of the Kshatriyas.

Barbarous character of the age.

Refutation of the alleged custom that the Bhíls shoot the bow with the middle fingers only.

the Bhíls have lost all memory of the tradition, and shoot their arrows in the usual way.[3]

4th, Public exhibition of arms at Hastinápur.

The legend of the public exhibition of arms at Hastinápur, at which the Kuravas and Pándavas displayed their skill before all the Chieftains and ladies of the royal house, is exceedingly curious and interesting; inasmuch as it was evidently an institution of the Kshatriyas, resembling in a remarkable degree the tournaments of the age of chivalry. Sometimes these public exercises took place, as on the present occasion, to enable the younger Chieftains to display their prowess before all the people of the Raj. At others however it was undertaken at a Swayamvara, for in certain cases the daughter of a Raja was not called upon to indicate the husband of her choice, but became the passive prize of that Kshatriya who distanced all his compeers in the performance of some difficult exploit. Under these latter circumstances the Swayamvara seems to have borne so strong a resemblance to the tournament, that it might almost be regarded as the origin of the institution. Subsequently, at a later period in the history of Hindú civilization, the feats of arms were no longer performed by Chieftains of high rank, in the hope of winning a Princess as a bride; but the exhibition degenerated into a mere prize ring, where professional boxers and wrestlers fought each other, or fought with bears and tigers, for the pleasure of the

Resemblance to a tournament.

Three varieties of public exhibition of arms, viz.

(1.) The exhibition proper.

(2.) The Swayamvara.

(3.) Professional pugilism and wrestling.

[3] For this information I am indebted to Colonel R. J. Meade, the agent to the Governor-General in Central India, and to Lieutenant T. Cadell, the Bhíl agent. Lieutenant Cadell kindly attempted to verify the tradition by directing a number of Bhíls, who were in his camp, to practise at a butt; but they all drew the bow with the fore and middle fingers, the arrow being held between the two, and declared that they did so after the manner of their ancestors. They knew no tradition of the custom mentioned, but the Karkoons, or writers, who were present, had heard or read of it.

Raja and his ladies. Instances of all these different forms of exhibitions of arms are to be found in the Mahá Bhárata, and will in due course be brought under consideration.

The narrative.

The narrative of the exhibition of arms at Hastinápur may now be related as follows:—

Maháraja Dhritaráshtra directs Drona to make preparations for a public exhibition of arms.

After a while the Kauravas and Pándavas became fully practised in the use of arms; and Drona told the Maháraja,[4] saying:—"Your own sons, and the sons of your brother Pándu, are well skilled in the use of weapons, and able to fight against other men on the field of battle." Then the Maháraja replied:—"Let a place be prepared in the great plain without the city, that the young men may engage in mock-fighting, and display their skill before all the Chiefs and people of the Raj." So Drona ordered every preparation, and a large space was set apart in the great plain, and fenced round about with barriers. And on one side of the ground galleries were built for the Maháraja and his Chieftains; and on the other side galleries were set up in like manner for the ladies of the royal house of Hastinápur.

Space set apart in the great plain.

The galleries.

Morning of the exhibition.

Galleries adorned with flags and garlands.

Now when every preparation had been made, the Maháraja appointed a day for the exhibition of arms. And when the morning of the day had begun to dawn, the galleries on either side, and the trees that were round about, were adorned with flags of various colours, and long garlands of sweetly-smelling flowers. After a while all the people of Hastinápur, and great multitudes from all parts of the Raj, gathered together round the barriers and between the galleries, to behold the exercises of the sons of Dhritaráshtra and the sons of Pándu. Presently the blind Maháraja was led in and took his seat upon his throne; and Bhíshma, who managed the affairs of the Raj, sat upon his right hand; and on his left sat Vidura, who was appointed to describe to the blind Maháraja all that took place in the plain below. And all the Chieftains of the royal house, and all the ladies of

The multitude.

The blind Maháraja.

The Chieftains and ladies.

[4] Dhritaráshtra is always alluded to throughout the Mahá Bhárata as the Maháraja, or "Great Raja," or Raja of Rajas.

Hastinápur, were arrayed in many-coloured cloths, and garlands of flowers, and bright jewels, and took their seats in like manner upon the galleries; and chief amongst the ladies were Gándhári, the mother of the Kauravas, and Kuntí, the mother of the Pándavas.

Drona and his son Aswatthá-ma invoke the gods.

When all was ready Drona, the preceptor, and his son Aswattháma, entered the area in pure white garments, and offered up prayers to the praise and glory of the gods. Then the young Princes in like manner entered the area arrayed in garments of different colours, and lightly girded for exertion. Each young man carried his bow and arrows in his hand, and respectfully saluted the feet of his preceptor, and awaited his commands. Each one then in turn exhibited his skill by shooting arrows at a butt, first on foot, and then mounted in succession upon a horse, an elephant, and a chariot. Next followed mock fights with the sword and buckler. Then the whole body of pupils, first on foot, and afterwards mounted as before on horses, elephants, and chariots, exhibited their skill in archery, whilst running, galloping, or driving round the area at full speed. After this the young men fought with clubs, and the fighting was terrible to behold; and then it was manifest to all men that there was ill blood between the Kauravas and Pándavas. At one end of the area Duryodhana engaged with Bhíma, and after exchanging some heavy blows, the mock combat became a downright battle. The young men rushed upon each other like wild elephants, and laid about them right manfully; whilst the multitude without caught the spirit of the fray, and ran to and fro, shouting some for Duryodhana and others for Bhíma, until the air was filled with noise and dust, and the whole plain was in great commotion. Drona sent his son Aswattháma to put an end to the combat, but no one heeded him; and Drona at last went himself with all haste, and parted the combatants by main force, and thus put a stop to the turmoil.

The Kauravas and Pándavas enter the area.

Salute Drona.

Feats of arms. Archery on foot horseback, elephants, and chariots.

Sword-fighting.

Club-fighting.

Combat between Duryodhana and Bhíma.

Interference of Drona.

Handsome appearance of Arjuna.

When the uproar was somewhat over, Drona called upon his favourite pupil Arjuna to exhibit his accomplishments

before the assembly. The young Chieftain was as handsome as one of the bright gods; and when he entered the area, clad in golden mail, and carrying in his hand a bow inlaid with various colours, the multitude hailed him as another Indra, and the heart of his mother Kuntí was filled with pride and exultation. Arjuna then performed very many excellent feats of arms, which surpassed any which had ever before been seen. He set up an iron figure of a boar upon a pillar of wood, and shot five arrows into its mouth at one bending of the bow. Next he tied a cow's horn on a pole, and in one discharge shot twenty-one arrows into the hollow of the horn. Then he mounted his chariot and was driven swiftly along, whilst he shot his arrows right and left with such rapidity and dexterity as bewildered all the beholders. His sword-playing was equally excellent, and he flourished the blade so fiercely that men thought they saw the lightning on the earth and heard the thunder in the sky. Then he took his quoit-shaped chakra, and whirled it at different objects without missing one. Lastly, he armed himself with the noose, and threw it about with such skill, that horse or deer, or any other animal at which he cast it, was invariably brought down. At length he finished his exercises, and respectfully saluted the feet of his preceptor, upon which Drona affectionately embraced him amidst the applause of the whole assembly.[5]

Marvellous feats of Arjuna in archery, sword-playing, whirling the chakra, and throwing the noose.

At this time, whilst the Pándavas were exulting in the triumph of Arjuna, and Duryodhana was bursting with jealous rage, another young warrior suddenly entered the

Sudden appearance of Karna, the son of a charioteer.

[5] The description of this exhibition of arms, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, is filled with Brahmanical exaggerations, which are pleasing to the present taste of the Hindús, but which are excluded from the above text, as they would be tedious to the last degree to European readers. They include the use of weapons which combine contradictory powers, such as arrows having a broad blade at the point which will cut a man's head off; or weapons of a supernatural character, such as arrows producing fire, water, venom, diseases, tempests, and other extraordinary phenomena. It will, however, be seen hereafter that the weapons described by the Brahmanical compilers of the Rámáyana are, if possible, still more extravagant. The Bráhmans in the present day point to the fire-producing arrows as proofs that the ancient Hindús were possessed of fire-arms.

area, striking his arms together with a great noise, after the manner of the ancient wrestlers. This was Karna, the son of a charioteer from the country of Anga, who was very skilful in the use of arms. Karna then said:—"O Arjuna, you have exhibited all your feats of arms; come and look on whilst I perform each one better than you." At these words Duryodhana was in an ecstasy of joy, whilst Arjuna was much displeased, and held his peace. Karna then, to the delight of the Kauravas, and the disquietude of the Pándavas, executed every feat which had been performed by Arjuna; and Duryodhana came forward and embraced Karna, and praised his prowess, and called him "brother." At this honour, Karna was greatly pleased, and said before them all that it was his desire to fight Arjuna. Then Arjuna was in a great rage, and cried out:—"You desire to place yourself on an equality with me, but I will so handle you, that you shall learn what it is for men like you to come here without being invited, and to speak before they are spoken to." Karna replied:—"O Arjuna, waste not your words, for when it comes to open fight between you and me, you shall see who will be roughly handled: and as you taunt me with having come without invitation, let me tell you that this plain is none of your property that I may not enter it without your invitation: All other questions between us must be settled by the sword and bow, and I will so handle you in the presence of your tutor here, that all present shall be astonished." These words filled Drona with wrath, and he cried out:—"Why do you listen to Karna with patience? You have my leave: Go, and fight him at once!" So Arjuna and his brothers stepped into the field to face Karna, and Duryodhana and his brothers came forward to back Karna; when a kinsman of the royal house, named Kripa, who was the brother of the wife of Drona, interposed to prevent a battle between the son of a Raja and the son of a charioteer. Kripa said to Karna:—"O young man, are you come hither to measure weapons with Arjuna? Know you that he is the son of Raja Pándu and the Rání Kuntí, and you must now declare the names

Exultation of Duryodhana and mortification of Arjuna.

Karna challenges Arjuna to single combat.

Mutual abuse.

Drona calls upon Arjuna to fight Karna.

Kripa interposes to prevent the battle.

of your father and mother, that we may know whether you are worthy of being matched with Arjuna." At these words Karna was abashed, and hung down his head like a drooping lily; for he knew that his father was only a charioteer. But Duryodhana, who desired to set up Karna against Arjuna, replied thus to Kripa:—"Greatness depends not upon birth but upon strength, and I hereby appoint Karna to be Raja of the country of Anga." So saying Duryodhana took Karna by the hand, and led him to a golden seat, and ordered the umbrella of royalty to be held over his head. At this moment the father of Karna appeared, trembling with age, but rejoicing in the honours bestowed upon his son; and when Karna saw him he threw down his bow and arrow and advanced to meet the old man, and kissed his feet. Then the Pándavas looked upon the two with smiles of contempt, and Bhíma said to Karna:—"Is it with such a father as this that you presume to match yourself with Arjuna: You, the son of a charioteer, what have you to do with a bow and arrows? You had better far take a whip and drive a bullock-cart after your father." Karna was enraged at their taunts, but made no reply; and the darkness came on very rapidly. And Duryodhana led Karna away to his own palace, and the multitude dispersed to their several homes.

Karna created a Raja by Duryodhana.

Appearance of Karna's aged father.

Karna's filial reverence.

Bhíma's contemptuous language towards Karna.

Combat prevented by the approach of night.

Review of the foregoing tradition of the exhibition of arms.

The picture presented in the foregoing tradition calls for little or no remark. The description of the mock combats, and the ill feeling displayed by Duryodhana and Bhíma, are perfectly true to human nature, and there is no doubt that the story is so far authentic. But the abrupt appearance of Karna on this occasion, and his sudden elevation to the dignity of Raja, are points of considerable interest, and seem to invite a close investigation. That Karna was of low birth may be accepted as a fact; but the implication that he was of low birth by reason of his being the son of a charioteer seems

Question respecting the birth of Karna.

open to question. The driving of chariots was a favourite and royal amusement with the ancient Kshatriyas, as it was with the ancient Greeks. It will be seen hereafter in the authentic tradition of Nala and Damayantí that the deserted Rání recognized her husband by his furious driving; whilst amongst the virtues of Maháraja Dasaratha, as described in the Rámáyana, he is said to have been a perfect charioteer. Again, the charioteer of the sovereign is frequently represented as his confidential friend and chief adviser. Thus it will be seen that Sanjaya was the friend and charioteer of Mahá-raja Dhritaráshtra, and that Sumantra was chief counsellor and charioteer of Maháraja Dasaratha. But the "arrangers" of the Mahá Bhárata were evidently anxious to throw contempt upon charioteers; and in addition to the reflection upon Karna's birth, there is a curious story in the narrative of the great war, of the rage of Raja Salya on being asked to drive Karna's chariot. The reason for this antagonism appears to be as follows:—The charioteer anciently occupied the same confidential position in relation towards a Raja as was subsequently filled by the Purohita, or family priest. Thus, just before the breaking out of the great war, Raja Drupada sent his Purohita as envoy to Hastinápur; whilst Dhritaráshtra sent his charioteer as envoy to the Pándavas. The inference, therefore, follows that the Bráhmans were jealous of the influence exercised by the charioteers; and the substitution of a Purohita for a charioteer probably marks the period in Hindú history when the military domination of the Kshatriyas was brought under the ecclesiastical and caste supremacy of the Bráhmans.

Driving chariots a royal amusement.

High rank of charioteers in ancient times.

Reasons why the Brahmanical compilers threw contempt upon the charioteers.

Confidential position of the charioteer, subsequently held by the Purohita, or family priest.

Historical significance of the change.

Karna's father not a charioteer but a carter.

As regards Karna, it seems not unlikely that his father was not a charioteer in the higher sense of the word, but a mere carter or waggoner. The language of Bhíma in taunting Karna seems to bear out this view. "You had better," he said, "take a whip and drive a bullock-cart after your father."

Question of Karna being created a Raja; mythical character of the legend.

The sudden elevation of Karna to the dignity of Raja appears to be open to question. The golden seat to which he is said to have been conducted is evidently mythical. The name of the territory over which he is appointed to be Raja is equally doubtful. Anga is a country which lies far away to the eastward, in the neighbourhood of the modern town of Bhagalpur; and consequently would be separated by an interval of many hundreds of miles from the Raj of Bhárata. But still the dignity may have been conferred, like that of a modern knighthood, without reference to territory. The right of Duryodhana to create a Raja seems, however, very dubious; and the subsequent language of Bhíma to Karna appears to imply that there was no real recognition of the new rank which had been thus bestowed upon him.

5th, Legend of the birth of Karna.

The legend of the birth of Karna is nothing more than a wild myth which has been concocted for the obvious purpose of ennobling Karna by connecting him with the royal house at Hastinápur. The myth is as extravagant and improbable as that of the birth of Vyása, and bears the same marks of a Brahmanical origin; but it may be related here, as reference is frequently made to it in the more modern portions of the Mahá Bhárata. The story is as follows:—

Early life of Kunti in the house of the Raja of the Bhojas.

Now Kuntí, the wife of Raja Pándu, was brought up in

the house of Kunti-bhoja, the Raja of the Bhojas, and she ever thought him to be her father; but her real father was Sura, the grandfather of Krishna.

Visit of Durvásas, the sage.

And it happened on a certain day that a sage named Durvásas came to the house of Kunti-bhoja; and he was tall in stature, and his hair was matted after the manner of a devotee, and his limbs were of the colour of honey. And Durvásas said to Kunti-bhoja:—"O Raja, I am desirous of dwelling with you, but if I do so your people must conform to all my wishes; and they must let me eat when I please, and sleep when I please, and no one must contradict me." And the Raja replied:—"My daughter Kuntí shall wait upon you always, and I am sure that she will serve you to your heart's content." Then the Raja called to his daughter and said:—"O Kuntí, this Bráhman is about to dwell in my house, and you must serve him night and day; for he is a man of great mortification, and has subdued all his senses by the strictness of his austerities." And Kuntí had great reverence for Bráhmans, and she gladly promised to serve Durvásas, the sage, according to the will of her father.

Kuntí appointed to wait day and night upon Durvásas.

Kuntí's dutiful service to the Bráhman.

Then the Raja lodged the Bráhman in the sacrificial chamber, where he had been used to kindle the sacred fire; and Kuntí served the Bráhman day and night with all diligence and purity. And Durvásas was greatly pleased with the service of the damsel; for sometimes he would go out in the morning, and not return till evening or midnight; but Kuntí was always ready with various sorts of victuals to set before him; and if he lost his temper or used harsh words, she took no notice, but continued to serve him as diligently as before.

Durvásas offers a boon to Kuntí.

When a year had passed away, Durvásas said to Kuntí:—"O well-accomplished damsel, I am entirely satisfied with your service; so now ask a boon of me, and let it be such as will render you blessed beyond all other women." But Kuntí replied:—"O greatest of Bráhmans, if you and my father are contented with me, it is as if you had bestowed all blessings upon me." So the Bráhman taught her a mantra, and said:—"Whenever you repeat this mantra, any

Teaches a mantra to Kuntí.

god you desire will descend from heaven, and you will bear to him a son, who shall be like unto his father." So Kuntí made no answer, and learned the mantra; for she feared lest she should offend the Bráhman, and he should pronounce a curse against herself and her father. And Durvásas praised her greatly to the Raja, and then left the house and went his way.

Kunti repeats the mantra, and is visited by the Sun god.

One day after this Kuntí beheld the bright Sun in the sky, and her soul was enlightened, and she saw the Sun in the likeness of a warrior arrayed in golden mail with earrings in his ears. And she repeated the words of the mantra that Durvásas had taught her; and the god left himself in the form of a Sun to illuminate the world, and descended to the earth in the form of a Raja, with a crown upon his head and bracelets upon his arms. But when Kuntí saw him she implored his forgiveness and besought him to return; but he said:—"I cannot do this, for all the gods are laughing at my discomfiture." And the eyes of Kuntí were opened, and she saw that Indra and the gods were laughing, and she was much ashamed. So the Sun stayed with her some time, and then went his way.

Birth of Karna.

After this Kuntí gave birth to a son with golden earrings in his ears, and a golden cuirass upon his body; and no one knew it, and she became a virgin as before. And she took the infant and placed it in a chest, and with many tears and prayers she floated it upon the river; and the river carried the chest into the waters of the Jumná, and the Jumná carried it to the Ganges, and the Ganges to the country of Anga. And the wife of a charioteer saw the chest and carried it to her home; and her husband opened it and found the babe therein, and he and his wife brought it up as their own child; and this boy was Karna.

The babe floated in a chest upon the river to the country of Anga.

Review of the foregoing myth. Its incredibility.

The foregoing myth is perhaps beneath criticism, but still the pretensions of Durvásas are very significant, and the reference to the country of Anga is worthy of consideration. The enormous distance which the chest would have had to travel down the

and Ganges to the country of Anga is alone
ht to render the myth of the birth of Karna
her incredible, even if his divine paternity
e explained away; but the object of the
not devoid of interest, and can easily be
d. Local tradition in the country which
y went by the name of Anga, has preserved
e of Karna. A dynasty of Buddhist Rajas
have reigned at Anga about the second
f the Christian era under the name of
nd it is by no means unlikely that the
l compilers sought to gratify the tastes
le of the country by establishing a myth-
ction between the Karna who fought
at war, with the Karna Rajas of Anga,
ished at a much later period. But the
aphical interval between Hastinápur and
already excited a suspicion that the
is a fabrication; and this suspicion is
by the supernatural details which the
ave introduced to carry out their design.
t legend, namely, that of the war against
aja of Panchála, may now be related as

Object of the myth.

Association of Karna with the later Rajas of Anga.

6th. War against Drupada, Raja of Panchála.

hen the Kauravas and Pándavas had proved be-
Maháraja and all his Chieftains, that they were
f bearing arms, they were called upon by Drona
e terms upon which he had educated them, namely,
Drupada, Raja of Panchála. Accordingly, Dur-
nd all his brethren marched out by themselves
ja Drupada, but were defeated by the enemy, and
o return to Hastinápur. Then Yudhishthira and
n marched out against Drupada, and they van-

Defeat of the Kauravas, and victory of the Pándavas.

ition will be found in Dr Buchanan's account of the Bahar district, Martin's Eastern India, Vol. I.

quished him and all his forces, and brought him a soner. So Drona took the half of Drupada's Raj, the remainder in the possession of Drupada. Th

Division of the Raj of Panchála.

Drupada returned to his own country; but he sw the day should come when he would be reveng Drona.

Significance of the legend of the division of the Raj of Panchála.

The story of this expedition against Dru somewhat isolated in the Mahá Bhárata, appears to have an important bearing main incident in the Epic. The defeat o ravas and victory of the Páṇdavas may b mythical; and, indeed, chiefly serve the tendency of the original bards to ce praises of the Páṇdavas at the expense o ravas. But the division of the Raj of seems to imply that Drona had some cla half share, and confirms the suspicion a pressed that Drona was a brother or nea of Drupada, and that the Brahmanica have suppressed the relationship in ord sent Drona as a Bráhman.

Geographical position of the Raj of Panchála.

The geographical position of the Raj opens up a curious question of inquiry. has been sometimes applied to the Punja Raj certainly appears to have been situated contiguity with that of Hastinápur. Bu identifies Panchála with Kanouj, which is two hundred miles from Hastinápur; wh compilers of the Mahá Bhárata indulg grander ideas, and seem to indicate that t Bhárata extended over the northern Doa the Raj of Panchála occupied the more portion as far as the junction of the Ga Jumná. It will be seen hereafter that th

nchála was probably a little territory in the more mediate neighbourhood of Hastinápur. HISTORY OF INDIA PART I.

The story of the rivalry between Yudhishthira d Duryodhana for the post of Yuvaraja, or heir-parent, may now be related as follows:—

7th. Rivalry between Yudhishthira and Duryodhana, for the post of Yuvaraja.

When the war against Drupada was fully over, there more ill blood between the Kauravas and the Pándavas d ever been before, because the Kauravas had been d by Drupada, and the Pándavas had gained the . Meantime the Maháraja decided that Yudhish- the eldest son of Pándu, had the best right to succeed in the Raj; and as the custom was, Yudhishthira was lled as Yuvaraja, or "Little Raja." Then Yudhish- began to rule the Raj for his uncle the Maháraja, and lory of his reign became greater than the glory of his r Pándu; for though he was not skilful in the use of like Bhíma or Arjuna, his wisdom and virtue were s throughout the land, and his truthfulness, and jus- and patience on all occasions rendered him beloved by eople.

Yudhishthira appointed Yuvaraja, or heir-parent.

ow when Yudhishthira was appointed Yuvaraja, his Duryodhana was in great affliction, and Duryodhana y and night with his brother Duhsásana, and his i, and his friend Karna, how to bring about the of the Pándavas. One day when the Maháraja alone, Duryodhana went into his presence, and to him as follows:—"O my father, why have you such small regard for your own sons, and treated o unworthily? You were the elder brother of Raja , and ought to have succeeded to the Raj, but you p the whole to your younger brother; and now you passed by your own sons, and have intrusted the ement of all affairs to the sons of Pándu: The Raj by right, and the inheritance should descend to us e your sons; why, then, do you give the preference rs, and make us small and contemptible in the eyes eople?" Dhritaráshtra replied:—"O my son, my

Jealousy of Duryodhana.

Conversation between Duryodhana and the Maháraja. Remonstrates the Kauravas being passed over in favour of the Pándavas.

RY OF DIA. T II.

brother Pándu was without an equal in all the world; h how with my blindness could I pretend to govern the R His sons after him are endued with every qualification the management of affairs, and give every satisfaction to the people; how then can I banish them from my council Moreover, Yudhishthira possesses the most praiseworth qualities, such as you do not yourself possess; how th can I be at enmity with him, and exclude him fro government?" Duryodhana said:—"I know of qualifications as render Yudhishthira superior to me do know that in the field I am more than a match for score of Yudhishthiras: So if you are resolved to ex me from all share in the management of the Raj, I certainly kill myself, and thus get rid of all my tions." Dhritaráshtra replied:—"O my son, why do give way to such violent impatience? If you are upon exercising power I will divide the manage and give the half to you and other half to Yudhisht so that henceforth there shall be no strife betwixt and you."

ahárája to divide dministra- between odhana Yudhish- .

When the Maháraja had thus spoken, Duryod said:—"I accept your proposition, O my father; bu the country be divided, so that the Pándavas can take own land and rule there, whilst I and my brethren at Hastinápur, and govern under you; for if b they dwell in the same place there may be feud and many of our friends may be slain." Th replied:—"The great head of our family is Bhishm he will never be satisfied if the Pándavas are sent a a distance from this city; neither will Drona or rest content; how then can I tell them to go?" D hana said:—"O Maháraja, it is beneath your dig consult others: Do you summon the Pándavas, and co them to go to the city of Váranávata, and dwell th some time; and they will obey your commands delay, and after they are gone, nobody will trouble the matter." Accordingly the Maháraja did as D hana counselled. He sent for Yudhishthira and

uryodhana sti- ilates for a di- sion of the nd, but is re- sed by the ahárája.

The Maháraja sends the Pán- davas to dwell for a while in the city of Váraná- vata.

n:—" O my son, there is a renowned city, rich in
ld and jewels, named Váranávata: Go thither, you
d your brethren, and dwell there for some time; and
r that I will recall you." So Yudhishthira and his
thren took leave of the Maháraja, and of all their kins-
n, and departed with their mother Kuntí to the city of
ánávata.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST EXILE OF THE PÁNDAVAS.

TORY OF
NI A.
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tic tradi-
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ávata, the
n Alláha-
0 miles to
uth-east of
tinápur.

Legend of the
rst exile of the
Pándavas, some
thousand years
later than the
ginal tradi-
tion.

WITH the journey of the Pándavas to the ci
Váranávata the narrative undergoes an entire ch
and for a brief period the authentic traditi
terly lost in a later fiction. Here it may be re
that so long as the scene is laid in the city
tinápur, or its immediate neighbourhood, s
the story seems to approximate to historic
but when the locality is removed to a dist
hundreds of miles from Hastinápur, the narr
immediately reduced to the condition of e
religious myth or a palpable fiction. Suc
case as regards the alleged journey of the P
to the city of Váranávata, the modern All
the sacred city at the junction of the Gang
Jumná, and one of the most famous places
grimage in Hindústan. A geographical in
five hundred miles separates the city of Ha
from the city of Alláhabád; and, in all prob
a chronological interval of some thousand years
ates the old tradition of the sons of Pándu fro
modern fiction of their visit to the city of V
vata. A better judgment, however, will be
after a brief narrative of the events which a
to have transpired, and which may now be re
as follows:—

Before the Pándavas departed out of the city of Hastinápur, their uncle Vidura took them aside, and told them that when they arrived at the city of Váranávata they should beware of fire; and he repeated a verse to the brethren, and said:—"Should a man come to you, and repeat this verse, put your trust in him, and receive him as a man sent by me for your deliverance." After many days the five Pándavas, and their mother Kuntí, reached the city of Váranávata; and very speedily their eyes were opened to a wicked plot which had been devised by Duryodhana and his friends. That jealous Chieftain, ever bent upon the destruction of his kinsmen, had sent on a trusty retainer, named Purochana, to prepare a handsome house in the city of Váranávata for the reception of the sons of Pándu; and Purochana had been secretly commanded to fill the house with lamp and resin, and to plaster the walls with a mortar of lime and pitch; so that some night, when the Pándavas and their mother were fast asleep, the doors might be fastened on the outside, and the house set on fire, and all within it be consumed in the flames. Accordingly Purochana welcomed the Pándavas with every sign of respect; and he conducted them first to the College of holy Brahmans, where they paid every respect and reverence to the Brahmans, and received their blessings and good wishes in return; and next he led them to the house prepared for their reception, and presented each of them with a collation of food, together with gold and jewels, silks and cloths, as is customary among the Rajas. Yudhishthira was amazed at the splendour of the habitation, but he began to smell the lime and mortar, and told his suspicions to his brother Bhíma. Meanwhile this a man came from Vidura, and repeated the verse which had been agreed upon, and said:—"Vidura has sent me to dig an under-ground passage from your house, to deliver you from it should it be set on fire." So after much consultation together, they secretly employed the man to dig the under-ground passage under-ground, by which they could escape out of the house, should the dwelling be set on fire and the doors be locked on the outside. When the under-ground passage

Extraordinary plot of the Kauravas to burn the Pándavas in their house at Váranávata.

Details of the magnificent reception of the Pándavas at Váranávata.

Suspicions of Yudhishthira.

Digging of a subterranean passage.

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Bhima anticipates the plot by burning the house of Purochana. Kunti gives a feast to the poor.

was all complete, Bhíma resolved that he would work upon Purochana, who was living in a house close by, all the mischief that Purochana was meditating against himself and brethren. Now it so happened that one day Kuntí invited all the poor people of the city, and gave them a feast; and amongst her guests was a Bhíl woman and her five sons, who, according to the practice of their tribe, drank a large quantity of strong liquor, and then lay down and slept heavily. That same night a violent wind arose, and Bhíma stole out through the passage, and strongly barricaded the house of Purochana, and set it on fire; and the flames speedily destroyed the building and reached the house of the Pándavas; and Bhíma then conducted his mother and brethren through the passage under-ground, and buried them away into the jungle. Next morning the people of the city saw that both houses were destroyed by fire, and believed that all the inmates had perished; for they discovered the blackened remains of Purochana and his attendants, and also those of the Bhíl woman and her five sons, whom they took to be those of Kuntí and the Pándavas. The tidings soon reached the city of Hastinápur, and the Kauravas rejoiced greatly at the supposed death of their enemies the Pándavas; but Bhíshma, Drona, and Dhritaráshtra were affected even unto tears.

House of the Pándavas catches fire.

Escape of the Pándavas and Kuntí into the jungle.

Joy of the Kauravas, and sorrow of the elders at the supposed death of the Pándavas.

Story of the visit of the Pándavas to Váranávata, to be referred to the later age of Brahmanism.

It would be presumptuous perhaps to say positively that there is no foundation whatever for this story in the original and authentic legend; yet it bears such evident traces of being entirely composed in the later age of Brahmanical revival, that it is impossible to escape the inference. The whole story turns upon burning the house of kinsmen, whilst those kinsmen are asleep inside: and this idea would be altogether repugnant to the sentiment of honour which undoubtedly prevailed amongst the ancient Kshatriyas, who regarded an

Burning a sleeping enemy totally opposed to Kshatriya ideas.

attack upon a sleeping enemy as a heinous crime.[1] But at the same time, this idea would be perfectly familiar to the Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata, who had only recently engaged in burning down the monasteries and temples of the Buddhists with all the deadly hate of religious persecutors. Again, the subordinate details of the fiction refer, in every way, to a later and more luxurious age. The city of Váranávata is said to have been famous for gold and jewels. The College of holy men to which the Pándavas were introduced on their arrival, is either Buddhist or Brahmanical; and so, too, is the feast given by Kuntí to all the poor of the city; whilst the alleged magnificence of the house in which the Pándavas were lodged, and the presents of gold and jewels, silks and cloths, belong altogether to a late period of Hindú civilization. The story of the Bhíl woman and her five sons who were burnt alive in the house, and originated the rumour that the Pándavas and their mother had perished in the flames, is also precisely one of those artificial turns in a narrative which betray the hand of the romancer or novelist. Altogether, it seems most probable that the whole story is a later fiction, introduced for the sole purpose of associating the Pándavas with the famous city of Váranávata.[2]

Familiar to the age when the Bráhmans persecuted the Buddhists.

Subordinate details to be also ascribed to a later age.

The fiction inserted to associate the Pándavas with the city of Váranávata.

Having made their escape from the city of Váranávata, the Pándavas are said to have disguised

Alleged escape of the Pándavas from the city of Váranávata into the great jungle.

[1] Compare the story of the terrible revenge of Aswattháma, in the night of the last day of the great war; where it will be seen that Aswattháma, even whilst bent upon being revenged on the murderer of his father, awoke his sleeping enemy before slaying him.

[2] An extraordinary well, or under-ground passage, still exists in the Fort at Alláhabád, and is pointed out as the veritable passage through which the Pándavas made their way out of the burning house between thirty and forty centuries

themselves as Bráhmans, and to have proceeded with all haste into the great jungle. Now if the Pándavas may be accepted as the representatives of the Aryan race, it would appear from the story that they had advanced far away to the eastward of the Aryan outpost at Hastinápur, and had almost reached the centre of the land of aborigines. This direction was undoubtedly the very one which was eventually taken by the Aryan invaders; that is, they pushed their way from the Punjab towards the south-east, along the fertile valleys of the Ganges and Jumná, until they arrived at the junction of the two rivers at Alláhabád. Probably, as already indicated, this migration occupied a vast period of unrecorded time, and the Aryans may not have reached Alláhabád until ages after the Kauravas and Pándavas had fought their famous battle for the little Raj at Hastinápur. But when the story of the war of the Mahá Bhárata had been converted into a national tradition, it seems not unlikely that the legends of the later wars waged by the Aryans against the aborigines during their progress towards the south-east, would be tacked on to the original narrative. This process appears to have been carried out by the compilers of the Mahá Bhárata; and although, as will be seen hereafter, the adventures of the Pándavas in the jungle, and their encounters with Asuras and Rákshasas, are all palpable fictions, still they are valuable as traces which have been left in the minds of the people of the primitive wars of the Aryans against the aborigines.

Pándavas to be regarded as the representatives of the Aryan race.

Progress of the Aryan invasion from the Punjab to Alláhabád.

Later legends of the wars of the Aryans against the aborigines, tacked on to the story of the great war.

Ancient wars to be found amongst the earliest traditions of every people.

The adventures of a band of warlike emigrants whilst seeking for new homes amongst an aboriginal population have been generally found amongst the

earliest events in the history of a people. These wars, however, have rarely been recorded with truthful simplicity by a prose annalist, but have generally fallen into the hands of bards, whose object was rather to gratify their audience than to instruct them in authentic history. Sometimes when the national legends have corresponded to the national religion, the narrative has assumed a historic form, as in the conquests of Joshua, and to some extent in the lives of Samson, of Gideon, and of Jephthah. But when the national religion has undergone modifications, as in the case of Greece and Rome, the legends have been remodelled by poets and dramatists, and converted into religious myths. Still further, when the old religion has been driven out altogether, and a new and radically foreign religion like Christianity has taken its place, the traditions of forgotten wars have been left in the hands of ballad singers and beldames, and consequently have been converted into barbarous nursery stories of giants and ogres. This latter fate has certainly befallen the traditions of forgotten wars in Europe; and a similar fate has befallen the Hindú traditions of the wars between the Aryans and aborigines.

National traditions preserved when corresponding to the national religion.

Remodelled by changes in the religion.

Converted into nursery stories when the old religion has been driven out by a new one.

It is somewhat remarkable that the general similarity of circumstances under which Hindú and European traditions of primitive wars have been exaggerated and modified, has resulted in a striking similarity in the fictions themselves. They are characterized by the same rude vigour of imagination; and consequently present the same extravagant pictures of the horrible combined with a broad sense of humour, which are precisely fitted to the tastes of an uncultivated people. In the Hindú fictions the

Striking similarity between Hindú and European traditions of forgotten wars.

Characteristics of Hindú fiction.

Wars of Bhima as the representative of the Aryan settlers against the aborigines.

aborigines are described under the names of Asuras and Rákshasas, as being giants and cannibals, and of course hideously repulsive; whilst the Aryan settlers, of whom Bhíma as the strongest man of the Pándavas is pre-eminently the type, are represented as overcoming their enemy by strength of arm, and under circumstances of rough comicality not unlike those which sometimes appear in a Christmas pantomime. It need scarcely be added that such stories are exceedingly popular with the Hindús; and indeed the degree to which the alternations of mirth and wonder are excited, is scarcely conceivable excepting by those who can sympathize in the undoubting and childish credulity of the masses.

Popularity of the fictions.

To reject such stories as unfitted to the dignity of history would be to lose some valuable glimpses into the inner life of ancient nations. The narratives may be palpable fictions, but they are true to an element of human nature; that element which leads the imagination to depict circumstances, not as they are, but as they would be best received in the times in which they are related. Histories of every description must be especially regarded from this point of view. The question of how far they represent the real facts of the period to which they refer is doubtless of primary importance, but it is nearly as important to consider how far they illustrate the ideas, the feelings, and the judgments of the age in which they were produced; for histories in general represent far more truthfully the spirit of the period in which they are written than the facts of the period to which they refer. Accordingly in relating the stories of Bhíma's adventures with the Asuras, the attention should be divided between the mirthful and

Historic value of the fictions, as illustrations of the period in which they were composed, rather than as facts belonging to the period to which they refer.

Interest to be divided between the fictions and the audiences to whom they are related.

marvellous incidents on the one hand, and the open-mouthed audiences on the other; between the grotesque and horrible scenes, and the alternate laughter and terror of the men, women, and children who are looking on. Nor must the narrator of the story be entirely forgotten; for the sympathies which exist between the Hindú story-teller, and the events he is describing, and the people to whom he is telling his tale of wonder, would be almost inconceivable to the European who may read a history aloud without action and without vivacity. Thus in the opening scene of the first fiction, where the giant Bhíma is carrying his mother and three brothers through a dreadful forest haunted with wild beasts and Asuras, an enthusiastic narrator will represent Bhíma by carrying two children on his back and one under each arm; and will moreover imitate the roaring of lions and tigers, and indulge in hideous grimaces to indicate the cannibal propensities of the Asuras. With these preliminary observations, the attention may now be directed to the stories themselves. The first fiction is as follows:—

Action of the narrator in heightening the interest of the fictions.

1st Fiction. Bhíma's encounter with Hidimba, the Asura.

Now when the Pándavas escaped from the burning house in the city of Váranávata, they proceeded in all haste towards the southern jungle, which was inhabited by wild beasts, and also by Rákshasas and Asuras, who were eaters of men. And Kuntí and all her sons, excepting Bhíma, were very weary; but Bhíma was tall and strong, and he carried his mother and elder brother on his back, and one of his younger brethren under each of his arms, whilst Arjuna followed close behind. Next morning they passed along the western bank of the river Ganges, and proceeded more and more towards the south, until they reached a very dark and dreadful forest; and all, excepting Bhíma, were so overpowered with sleep that they threw themselves beneath

Bhíma carries his mother and three brethren through the great forest.

a tree, and were soon in a profound slumber, whilst Bhíma stood by to guard them. It so happened that hard by was the abode of a terrible Asura and man-eater, named Hidimba, who had yellow eyes and a horrible aspect, but who possessed great strength; and he had a sister, named Hidimbi, who was very tall and handsome. Now the cannibal Hidimba smelt human beings in the neighbourhood of his den, and he sent out his sister to bring them in; but when she saw the long arms and mighty form of Bhíma, resplendent with royal vestments and rich jewels, she fell in love with him, and straightway proposed to carry him away into the jungle upon her back, and to leave the others for her brother to devour. But Bhíma refused to desert his mother and brethren in such extremity, and declared himself willing to fight the Asura. Whilst he was thus speaking, the monster came up furious with wrath at the delay of his sister, and engaged in battle with Bhíma. First the Asura and Bhíma fought with fists; then they tore up trees and cudgelled each other; and then, when all the trees had been torn up and broken to pieces, they attacked each other with vast stones. The Pándavas were awakened by the noise of the combat, and Arjuna came up to help his brother; but at that moment Bhíma seized the Asura by the waist, and whirled him round several times, and dashed out his brains against the ground; and then holding his head under one arm he so belaboured him with his fist that he broke every bone in his body.

Description of the hideous Asura Hidimba, and his beautiful sister Hidimbi.

Hidimbi's proposals to Bhíma.

Battle between Bhíma and Hidimba.

Horrible death of the Asura.

Then the sister of the Asura set up a cry so terrible that the wild beasts of the jungle fled away from fear; but after a while, when she saw that Bhíma was leaving the place together with his mother and brethren, she ceased her cries and began to follow them. And Bhíma desired her to return to the abiding-place of her brother; but she replied that as she had chosen him for her husband, she would never leave him, but henceforth be his faithful slave. She then threw herself at the feet of Kuntí, and wept bitterly, and said:—"O lady, command your son to take me as his wife, for I have known no man; and if he refuse to take me

Hidimbi entreats Bhíma to take her as his wife.

I will kill myself, and my blood will be upon your head." So Kuntí, believing that the strong Asura woman, experienced in the jungle, would greatly help them in their sojournings, desired Bhíma to marry her; and Bhíma took Hidimbi as his wife, and the marriage rites were duly performed by his elder brother Yudhishthira. And Bhíma took his newly married wife, and went away to a beautiful spot on a mountain, where the flowers were blooming and a crystal stream was flowing, and the trees were laden with fruits of the choicest description; and there Hidimbi brought him every day such prodigious quantities of excellent food that he rejoiced exceedingly. And in due course a son was born to them as robust as his parents; and Bhíma then returned with his wife to his mother and brethren, and presented his sturdy infant to the delighted Kuntí.

Marriage rites performed by Yudhishthira.

Extraordinary honeymoon of Bhíma and Hidimbi.

The foregoing fiction is chiefly remarkable for the downright plainness of the points of interest. The gloomy forest, the wild beasts, the cannibals, the strong man carrying his mother and brethren, the terrible Asura and his handsome sister, the triumph of Bhíma, the outspoken desire of the handsome Asura to become the wife of the strong man, the marriage, the honeymoon, and the birth of a boy, all follow one another with a simplicity which is as charming as a story invented by a child. The death to which the Asura is subjected is especially worthy of notice, for it is not only mythical in itself, but is sufficient to indicate a myth. In the authentic tradition of the great war it will be seen that Bhíma beheaded his enemy and drank his blood; but in the myths he either whirls his enemy round and dashes out his brains, or rends him asunder, or kneads up his flesh, blood, and bones into an extraordinary ball. A modern critic might also object to the improbability of Bhíma leaving his mother and brothers

Review of the first fiction.

Extreme simplicity of the points of interest.

Extraordinary mode in which Bhíma destroyed the Asura.

Improbabilities in the story.

in the jungle during a lengthened honeymoon, which included the birth of a son. There is no necessity however for bringing forward further proofs that the whole story is fictitious. The fact that shortly afterwards Bhíma marries again without any reference to his Asura wife; and that neither his Asura wife, nor his son by her, ever re-appear in the authentic tradition, will suffice to indicate that it is a later addition to the main tradition. As regards the date of its composition, it should probably be referred to the Buddhist period, when caste distinctions were not generally recognized. The story of the marriage of Bhíma with an Asura woman may have been fictitious, but still the fiction could only have found currency at a time when the union of a Kshatriya to an Asura was not foreign to the national sentiment, and when caste ideas, such as at present exist, did not prevail. The second fiction may now be related as follows:—

Further proofs that the narrative is a fiction, originating in the Buddhist period.

2nd Fiction. Bhíma's encounter with Vaka the Asura.

Now when Bhíma had returned to his mother and brethren, the sage Vyása suddenly appeared to them, and advised them to dwell in the city of Ekachakrá; so they departed out of the jungle, and took up their abode in that city, and dwelt there for a long time in the house of a Bráhman. Every day the brothers went out in the disguise of mendicant Bráhmans to collect food as alms, and whatever was given to them they brought home at night to their mother Kuntí, who thereupon divided the whole into two equal portions, and gave one to the wolf-stomached Bhíma, whilst the remaining half sufficed for all the others. One day the Pándavas and their mother heard a great noise of weeping and wailing in the house in which they were dwelling, and Kuntí and her sons entered the apartments of the Bráhman, and found their host and his wife, together with their son and daughter, in an agony of grief. On inquiring the cause they were told that a great Asura Raja,

Life of the Pándavas as mendicant Bráhmans in the city of Ekachakrá.

Legendary voracity of Bhíma.

named Vaka, lived near the city, and forced the Raja of that city to send him a great quantity of provisions every day, as well as a man to accompany the provisions; and that Vaka every day devoured the man as well as the provisions; and that on that very day the family of the Bráhman was required to supply the man. Then the Bráhman said that he would go himself and be devoured by the Asura, but he wept very bitterly at the hardness of his destiny. Then the wife and daughter of the Bráhman, each in her turn, prayed that she might go in his room, but he would not suffer either, and they all three lifted up their voices and wept very sore. Now the Bráhman had an infant son who could scarcely speak, and when the little lad saw that his parents were very sorrowful, he broke off a pointed blade of grass, and said with a prattling voice:—"Weep not, my father, weep not, my mother, for with this spike I will kill the man-eating Asura." At this sight Kuntí bade the family dry their tears, for that one of her sons would go to the Asura; but the Bráhman said:—"You are Bráhmans, and especially my guests; and if I go myself I am obeying the dictates of the Raja, but if I send one of you, I cause the death of a Bráhman, and of one who is my guest, and I do an act which is abhorred by the gods." Kuntí answered:—"The Asura will have no power over my son Bhíma, and I will send him to destroy the cannibal." And the Bráhman consented. Then Bhíma obeyed the commands of his mother with great joy. He set out with the ordained quantity of provisions, consisting of a waggon-load of kichri, a fine buffalo, and a huge jar of ghee, and he went on until he came to the banyan tree under which Vaka was accustomed to eat his meals. And a crowd of people followed him, for all were desirous of seeing the coming combat, but when they beheld the banyan tree they fled away in great terror. Bhíma then proceeded to eat up all the victuals that were in the waggon, and to re-fill it with dirt; and he then drank up all the ghee, and re-filled the jar with water of the vilest description. When he had finished, Vaka came forward ravenous with hunger, with two large bloodshot eyes as big

Vaka, the Asura, demands a human victim every day from the city of Ekachakrá.

Pathetic description of the family of a Bráhman, who were required to furnish a human victim.

Bhíma's serio-comic preparations for doing battle with the Asura.

Disappointment and wrath of the Asura.

as saucers, and a jaw gaping open like a cave; and Vaka uncovered the waggon and found that it contained nothing but dirt; and he raised the jar, and the villainous liquor poured over his face and into his gaping mouth. Then his eye fell upon Bhíma who was sitting on the ground with his back towards him, and in his rage he struck Bhíma with all his might with both fists; but Bhíma cared not for the blow, and arose up and laughed in his face. Then the Asura was in violent wrath, and he tore up a large tree by the roots, and rushed at Bhíma to demolish him; but the mighty Pándava in like manner tore up a huge tree and struck about him lustily; and each one tore up trees by the roots, and broke them to pieces against the other, until not a tree was left; and then they fought with their fists until the Asura was spent. After this Bhíma seized Vaka by the legs and rent him asunder; and the Asura expired with a bellowing cry which seemed as if it would bring the heavens about their ears. All the other Asuras, the subjects of the slain Chieftain, were then in a great terror, and came forward with their hands clasped together as suppliants to the conqueror of their Raja. So Bhíma bound them over by solemn oaths never more to eat the flesh of men, nor to injure them in any way. And he dragged the slain monster by the heels to the gate of the city, and left it there and entered the city by another way; and he went to the house of his mother and brethren, and told them all that had occurred. And when he had finished, Yudhishthira said that they must immediately leave the city, lest the people should discover who they were, and the news should reach the ears of the Kauravas that they were still alive; and accordingly they all departed out of Ekachakrá, together with their mother Kuntí. Meantime the people of the place found the dead body of the Asura, and shouted with joy; but when they learnt that the brethren had left the city they were very sorrowful, as they were eager to show their gratitude to their deliverer.

The battle.

Bhíma rends Vaka asunder.

Submission of the subjects of the Asura.

The Pándavas depart out of the city of Ekachakrá.

Review of the second fiction. Painful realism of the narrative.

This extraordinary fiction is a striking reflex of the mind of the Hindú. There is a horrible realism

in the description of Vaka, the cannibal, which is immediately succeeded by one of the most pathetic scenes which ever presented itself to the imagination of the poet. The shrinking of the poor Bráhman from his impending fate, and the weeping and groaning of the wife and daughter, might easily have been suggested to ordinary minds; but the introduction of the little boy waving his spear of grass in childish anger at the Asura is not only an exquisite touch of nature, but an affecting illustration of that warm affection for children, and deep sympathy in all their thoughts and ways, which are the special characteristics of the Hindú. The transition from profound sorrow to the most intense delight is another curious feature in the narrative. Whilst the women and children in the Hindú audience have been shedding real tears, and even weeping violently, in pity for the poor Bráhman and his wife and daughter, they never fail to laugh obstreperously at the preliminary proceedings of Bhíma for exciting the wrath of the Asura, and to raise a perfect shout when the Asura discovers the tricks which have been played upon him, and is subsequently rent asunder by the mighty Pándava. The sequel of the story is not without historic significance with reference to the advance of the Aryans through an aboriginal population. Rude and barbarous as the Kshatriya warriors may have been, the aboriginal peoples appear to have been of a still more brutal and savage character, living in caves in the jungle, and devouring human flesh; and it is easy to conceive that when an Aryan Raja had vanquished an Asura Chieftain, he would bind over the subjects of that Chieftain to abandon their

Masterly stroke of genius in the introduction of the Bráhman's infant son.

Hindú fondness for children.

Intense delight of a Hindú audience at the irritating proceedings of Bhíma.

Historical significance of the story, as illustrating the extension of the Aryan supremacy over the aborigines.

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cannibal habits, and keep the peace towards their more civilized neighbours. The date of the story may be fixed, like that of the preceding fictions, in the age of Buddhism; and the lives which the Pándavas are said to have led in the city of Ekachakrá is precisely that of Buddhist priests carrying round the alms bowl.

Buddhistic character of the story.

There is another point in connection with this mythical narrative of the first exile of the Pándavas, which must not be passed over in silence, namely, the distinction between the city and the jungle. The cities of Váranávata and Ekachakrá, the modern Alláhabád and Arrah, were each occupied by Bráhmans, who may be regarded as the later representatives of the Aryan population, whilst the jungle was evidently in the possession of the Asuras or aborigines. Then, again, whilst the Aryan outpost at Alláhabád seems to have maintained an ascendancy over the aborigines, or at any rate was apparently secure from their attacks; the city of Arrah, which was two hundred miles further to the eastward, was compelled to pay a daily tribute of provisions to the Raja of the Asuras.

Distinction between the Aryans residing in cities, and the aboriginal people of the jungle.

Ekachakrá, or Arrah, 200 miles to the eastward of Váranávata, or Alláhabád.

CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE OF THE PÁNDAVAS.

AFTER Bhíma's battle with Vaka, the narrative again changes from fiction to reality; and the reader is somewhat suddenly transplanted from the region of fancy in eastern India, to the north-west country of authentic tradition, of which Hastinápur may be regarded as the centre. The events which followed may therefore be received as being more or less based upon actual fact. They refer to the marriage of the five Pándavas to one wife, who was the daughter of that Raja Drupada of Panchála, whom they had themselves reduced to submission at the instance of their tutor Drona. The whole story is so foreign to modern ideas, and at the same time so suggestive and significant, that it must be regarded as forming one of the most important traditions in the Mahá Bhárata. The narrative, however, has undergone so many modifications in order to bring it into conformity with later ideas, that it will be necessary hereafter to subject all its details to careful investigation, in order that the historical significance of the legend can be fully apprehended without doing an injustice to the moral sense of the modern Hindús.

Narrative reverts from fiction to authentic tradition.

Important story of the marriage of the five Pándavas to Draupadí, daughter of Raja Drupada.

Extensive modifications of the tradition in order to reconcile the polyandry with modern ideas of morality.

The first anomaly which attracts the attention

in connection with this marriage, is the idea of polyandry as an institution; an idea which is certainly involved in the marriage of five brothers to one wife. But this practice, repulsive as it is to all civilized ideas, whether Hindú or European, is still the custom amongst the Buddhists of Thibet; where the elder brother possesses the exclusive privilege of choosing a wife, who henceforth becomes the joint wife of all the brothers of the family. The origin of this depraved institution has been ascribed to various causes. It is said to have been adopted as a means for preventing any undue increase in the members of the family; an object of some importance when the whole means of subsistence possessed by a family is drawn from a certain definite area of cultivated land. Again, it may have sprung up amongst a pastoral people, where men are frequently away from their homes for many months at a time, either to seek new pastures for their cattle, or to dispose of the cattle amongst the people of the plains; and where, consequently, these duties would be undertaken by the brethren in turns, so that whilst some were away with the cattle, others would remain at home with the joint wife of the family. Amongst the ancient Kshatriyas, however, the practice may have arisen from another cause. They were essentially a martial and a conquering race, amongst whom the ties of domestic life are always less valued than amongst a more industrious and settled population. They had migrated at some primeval epoch from their cradle in Central Asia to seek new homes to the eastward of the Indus; and under such circumstances they would naturally bring with them as few women as possible. But whilst

Polyandry, an institution still existing in Thibet.

Three different theories of the origin of the institution.

(1.) Division of land amongst families.

(2.) Absenteeism of some of the brothers on pasturing expeditions.

(3.) Scarcity of women amongst a military class of foreign emigrants.

the sexual instinct will yield for a time to that more imperious instinct which drives men to seek subsistence in a foreign soil, it will speedily find a gratification even in the most revolting practices, unless controlled by the dictates of sentiment or reason.[1]

The Swayamvara; origin of the institution.

Another institution in connection with the Pándavas, is the Swayamvara of Draupadí, the lady to whom they were united. The Swayamvara has already been noticed, but a few additional explanations appear to be necessary. Amongst a military class, where women are pre-eminently looked upon as passive instruments of pleasure, and, consequently, as objects of value, they will be specially regarded as the prizes of skill or valour. In war, the wife or daughter of a vanquished enemy became the lawful prize of the conqueror, and was compelled to wait upon him as her lord and master. In peace the daughter of a Kshatriya was permitted to choose a husband for herself amongst a crowd of candidates for her hand; or was given as a prize to that warrior who proved most skilful in the use of the bow, and who, consequently, would be the most powerful protector. The difficulty of reconciling

Women regarded as prizes.

[1] The earlier Buddhist legends preserved in the Mahawansi present a curious instance of these illicit marriages. Four brothers retired into the jungle with their five sisters, in order to make way for the succession of a younger son of their father by a young and favourite wife. They settled near the hermitage of Kapila the sage, dwelling in huts made of branches of trees, and subsisting on the produce of the chase. Ultimately, they appointed their eldest sister Priya to be Queen mother, and then each one married one of his sisters not born of the same mother. In this manner they founded the city of Kapilapur. The eldest sister Priya ultimately retired on account of leprosy and married a Raja of Benares. See *ante*, p. 69, *note*.

This legend may be a Buddhist perversion of the more ancient Kshatriya tradition. It will be seen hereafter that the five Pándavas married Draupadí at the city of Kampilya. According, however, to the Matsya Purána it was at the city of Kapila.

the institution of polyandry with that of the Swayamvara, will be duly indicated in the course of the narrative. Both have long since passed into disuse. As the Kshatriyas established themselves in the land, the true instinct which leads a man to seek for a wife, who shall be specially and entirely his own, gradually asserted itself, or only yielded in a later age to that mistaken idea of pleasure which leads the mere sensualist to indulge in a change of partners. At the same time, the feuds and bloodshed which frequently accompanied or followed a Swayamvara, in consequence of the jealous wrath which such assemblies were eminently calculated to excite, naturally led to the decline of the institution, and to the introduction of the custom of contracting infant marriages by which such outrages were effectually avoided.

Decay of the two institutions of Polyandry and the Swayamvara.

With these preliminary explanations, the tradition of the Swayamvara of Draupadí may now be related as follows:—

Tradition of the Swayamvara of Draupadi.

Now when the Pándavas had departed out of the city of Ekachakrá, they journeyed to another city, where they found every man discoursing upon the approaching Swayamvara of the beautiful Princess Draupadí, the only daughter of Drupada, the Raja of Panchála. And all the people said that this damsel was the loveliest in all the world, and as radiant and graceful as if she had but just descended from the city of the gods; and that all the Rajas from the four quarters of the earth would be present at the Swayamvara, and would seek to win so beautiful a damsel for a wife. Then the five Pándavas were all deeply stricken by what they heard of Draupadí, and they all resolved to attend her Swayamvara; and they could not sleep all that night for thinking of the damsel. And when it was early morning they left their mother Kuntí at a house, under the charge of a

Beauty of Draupadi.

The Pándavas resolve to attend.

Engage Dhaumya to be their family priest, and leave Kunti in his charge.

Bráhman whose name was Dhaumya, whom they had engaged to be their Purohita, or family priest; and they set off with all speed for the city of Kámpilya, which was the city of the Raja Drupada. And when they reached that city they found a vast number of Rajas encamped, with a great host of troops and elephants, and multitudes of Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, travelling merchants, showmen, and spectators. And there was set apart without the city a large plain enclosed by barriers, in which the Rajas were to exhibit their skill in archery; and around the plain were many glittering pavilions for the lodging of the more distinguished guests, and also raised galleries from whence to behold the performances. And at one end of the plain was a tall pole, and on the top of this pole was a golden fish, and below the golden fish was a chakra ever whirling round; and the rule of the Swayamvara was, that whoever discharged an arrow through the chakra at the first shot, and struck the eye of the golden fish, that man should be the husband of the daughter of Raja Drupada.

The city of Kámpilya.

The great plain.

Pavilions for the suitors.

The golden fish.

Rule of the Swayamvara.

After sixteen days of sports and feasting the morning of the Swayamvara dawned upon the city of Kámpilya; and at the rising of the sun, gorgeous flags were waving in every quarter, and the city was awakened by the sounding of trumpets and beating of drums. Then all the people of the city gathered together upon the plain, and assembled round the barriers; and the well-armed soldiers of the Raja maintained the most perfect order, whilst dancers and showmen, jugglers and musicians, actors and athletes, wrestlers and swordsmen, delighted the spectators by their various performances. Presently the Rajas and Chieftains took their appointed seats in the galleries; and there the Pándavas beheld their bitter enemies, who thought them dead, the Raja Duryodhana, the ambitious Karna, and many Kaurava Chieftains. There also were the two great Princes of the Yádava tribe, reigning at Dwáraká,—the amorous Krishna, and his elder brother, the wine-drinking Balaráma. From the west came Jayadratha, Raja of Sindhu, and the two sons of the Raja of Gandhára. From the east came Vatsaraja,

Morning of the Swayamvara.

Public rejoicings.

Exhibitions of dancers, showmen, jugglers, musicians, actors, athletes, wrestlers, and swordsmen.

Catalogue of the Rajas.

Raja of Kosala,—Jarásandha, Raja of Magadhá,—and Vasudeva, Raja of Paundra. From the south came Sisupála, Raja of Chedi,—Viráta, Raja of Viráta,—and Salya, Raja of Madra. Besides these were a host of other Rajas, too numerous to mention. And provisions of every sort were served up to the guests in the galleries; whilst cup-bearers went round distributing and sprinkling rose water, sandal, odoriferous woods, and other sweet perfumes.

Feasting of the Rajas.

After a while the moment arrived when the young Princess was to exhibit herself in all her loveliness to those who hoped to gain her for a bride; and the beautiful damsel was dressed in elegant array, and adorned with radiant gems, and led into the arena, carrying in her hand the garland which she was to throw over the neck of that fortunate hero who might have the fortune to win her to be his wife. Then the different quires of Bráhmans chaunted Vedic hymns to the glory and praise of the gods, and filled the heavens and the earth with the music of their prayers. After this, and amidst a universal silence, the Prince Dhrishta-dyumna, who was the brother of Draupadí, stood by the side of his resplendent sister, and proclaimed that whoever shot the arrow through the chakra in the first attempt, and struck the eye of the golden fish, should have the Princess for his wife. The Prince then told into the ears of Draupadí the name and lineage of every one of her suitors; and he also told her in the hearing of all, that she must place the garland round the neck of that man who struck the fish, and accept him for her husband from that day. Dhrishta-dyumna then turned to the Rajas and Chieftains, and said:—"Here stands this lady, my sister; whoever feels confident in his skill and strength that he can hit the mark in a single trial, let him arise and fulfil the conditions of the Swayamvara."

Draupadí conducted into the area by her brother Dhrishta-dyumna.

Vedic hymns.

Dhrishta-dyumna proclaims the conditions of the Swayamvara.

Recites the names and lineage of his sister's suitors.

The garland.

At these words the Rajas arose from their seats and approached the pole on which the golden fish was fixed; and the chakra below it was ever turning round; and they viewed the strong and heavy bow from which the arrow was to be discharged. Now every man was jealous of the other, and yet for a long while no Chieftain would take up the bow,

Reluctance of the Rajas to commence the trial.

lest he should fail to bend it, and thus excite the laughter of the multitude. Presently a Raja stepped before his fellows and tried to bend the bow, but could not; and another and yet another essayed in like manner to string the bow, but all were alike unable so to do because of its great size and strength. Then many of the Rajas made the attempt, and they strained themselves to the very uttermost, casting aside their robes and collars, and putting forth their whole strength, but not one amongst them could bend the bow. Then the ambitious Karna entered the lists, and, to the surprise and discomfiture of all who were there, he bent the bow and fitted the shaft to the string; but whilst all were alarmed, the proud Draupadí was resolved that no son of a charioteer should become her lord; and she cried out with a loud voice:—"I wed not with the base-born!" And Karna was abashed, for he knew the lowness of his birth; but whilst bursting with rage and bitterness he walked out of the area with a smile; and looking towards the Sun, he said:—"O Sun, bear witness that I throw away the arrow, not because I cannot shoot through the chakra, and strike the eye of the golden fish, but because Draupadí would not accept me for her husband even if I performed the feat." Then Sisupála, the Raja of Chedi, and Jarásandha, the famous Raja of Magadhá, tried one after the other to bend the bow, but they both failed; and all the other Chieftains, seeing that the feat was beyond the strength of such mighty Rajas, dared not make the venture lest they too should provoke the laughter and derision of the multitude.

Failure of the suitors to bend the bow.

Karna enters the lists and strings the bow.

Extraordinary interference of Draupadi, on account of the low birth of Karna.

Karna appeals to the Sun.

Other Rajas fail to bend the bow.

All this time the Pándavas had been standing amongst the crowd disguised as Bráhmans, but suddenly Arjuna advanced and lifted the bow; and a cry of astonishment ran through the assembly at seeing a Bráhman attempt to compete at a Swayamvara. Some there were who jeered at Arjuna, and said:—"Shall a Bráhman do this great thing which all the mighty Rajas have failed to do?" Others cried:—"Unless the Bráhman knew his own strength and skill he would not make the essay." And all the real Bráhmans that were present were fearful lest the attempt

Sudden appearance of Arjuna, disguised as a Bráhman.

Real Bráhmans dissuade Arjuna, lest the Rajas should be offended.

should offend the Rajas, so that the Rajas should give them no gifts, and they entreated Arjuna to withdraw; but Arjuna was heedless alike of words of blame and words of encouragement, and he offered up a mental prayer to his tutor Drona, and then bent the bow and drew the cord, and fitting the arrow to the string, he discharged it through the centre of the chakra, and struck the eye of the golden fish. Then a roar of acclamations arose from that vast assembly like the crash and roll of distant thunder, and the Bráhmans waved their scarfs in the greatness of their delight, and the drums and trumpets filled the air with joyous music. And the beautiful Draupadí was filled with joy and wonder at the youth and grace of the hero who had struck the golden fish; and she came forward as she had been commanded by her brother, and threw the garland round the neck of Arjuna, and permitted him to lead her away according to the rule of the Swayamvara.

Arjuna mentally prays to Drona, and strikes the golden fish.

Acclamations of the multitude, and delight of the Bráhmans.

Draupadí acknowledges Arjuna as the victor.

But meanwhile the Rajas were lashing themselves into fury, and they cried out:—"Could not a Raja win the damsel, and are we to be humbled by a Bráhman? Is Raja Drupada to invite us to the Swayamvara, and then to give his daughter to a Bráhman? A Raja's daughter must ever choose a Kshatriya for her husband, and shall a Bráhman trespass upon our right? The Bráhman's life is sacred, but down with the guilty race of Drupada!" With these cries they gathered round Raja Drupada with angry countenances and naked swords, and threatened to burn the Princess upon a pile unless she choose a Kshatriya for her husband. But the Pándavas rushed to the rescue of Drupada, and performed prodigies of valour against the Rajas, and a crowd of Bráhmans pressed round to support them. At this moment Krishna, Prince of Dwáraká, saw through the disguise of the five brothers, and in gentle words he allayed the wrath of the angry Rajas, and gave his judgment that Draupadí had been fairly won; and the Rajas returned from the field in sullen anger, and the Pándavas were permitted to depart with the beautiful Draupadí who had become the prize of Arjuna.

Wrath and mortification of the Rajas at being beaten by a Bráhman.

Fierce battle between the Rajas and Pándavas.

Mediation of Krishna.

Arjuna and his brethren lead away Draupadi.

At evening time the Pándavas arrived at the house whore they had left their mother Kuntí, and they said to her:—"O mother, we have made a fine acquisition this day." Then Kuntí thought in her heart that her sons had brought home much victual, and she said:—"Go and share it, you five brothers, amongst yourselves, and eat it." To this Yudhishthira replied:—"O mother, what is this you have said? Arjuna has this day gained a damsel at her Swayamvara." Then Arjuna took Draupadí by the hand, and led her forward, and laid her at the feet of his mother. And Kuntí said:—"I have committed a grievous fault in saying, 'Go you five brothers and share it among you, and eat it.'" She then turned to Yudhishthira and said:—"O my son, the words have escaped my lips; and now you must some way contrive that they may be verified, and at the same time that you yourselves may not be involved in crime." Yudhishthira remained in deep reflection for two minutes, and then said to Arjuna:—"O brother, you have obtained this maiden: Come now and let us marry her to you according to the law." Arjuna answered:—"O Yudhishthira, we are all your servants, and this damsel is worthy of being espoused by you." Yudhishthira replied:—"We must act in conformity with the will of the Almighty; and Raja Drupada has properly the disposal of his own daughter, and she shall be the wife of him upon whom her father shall please to bestow her." At these words of their eldest brother, each one of the five brethren felt an equal desire to marry the damsel.

The Pándavas inform their mother that they have gained an acquisition.

Kuntí desires them to share it.

Fears the consequences of her words.

Conversation of Yudhishthira and Arjuna.

Postponement of the marriage of Draupadí.

Now when the brethren had prepared the victuals for the evening meal, Kuntí would not divide them amongst her sons as she had been accustomed to do, but desired her new daughter-in-law to undertake the duty, saying:—"O damsel, first set aside a portion for the poor, and then divide the remainder into two, and give one half to Bhíma, for he has a great appetite, and the other half divide equally among the four remaining brethren." Draupadí then distributed the victuals as she was directed, reserving a sufficiency for herself and Kuntí; but she could not forbear a smile as she

Draupadí distributes the provisions at supper in the place of Kuntí.

gave so large a share to Bhíma. When they had finished their meal, it was full night and they all prepared for rest; and Draupadí slept on a couch by the side of Kuntí, and the five brothers lay at the feet of their mother, and after a long discourse upon what had befallen them at the Swayamvara, they slumbered until the dawn of morning.

Humiliation of Raja Drupada at his daughter being won by a Bráhman.

All this time Raja Drupada had been much troubled in heart that his daughter should have been won by a Bráhman, whom no one knew; and his son Dhrishta-dyumna had been equally anxious to learn what manner of men they were who had led away his sister from her Swayamvara. And Dhrishta-dyumna had kept his eyes upon the Pándavas from the moment that Draupadí had thrown the garland round the neck of Arjuna; and he had followed them all the way to their own home, and seen his sister distribute the victuals at the evening meal, and heard the brothers discoursing about themselves and the Swayamvara. And Dhrishta-dyumna learnt, to his great surprise and joy, that the five brethren were not Bráhmans but Kshatriyas, and he also thought in his heart that they belonged to the royal house of Hastinápur, and he hastened back to the city of Kámpilya to acquaint his father with the glad tidings. And Raja Drupada rejoiced greatly, and early next morning he sent his family priest as envoy to the brethren to inquire who they were, and the priest went his way and put the question to the brethren. And Yudhishthira replied:—"Present our prayers to the Raja, and say that he may set his mind at rest, for that his daughter has allied with a family that will neither straiten him nor disgrace him, and bid him remember that no one but a man of noble birth could have shot the eye of the golden fish at the Swayamvara." Whilst Yudhishthira was yet speaking a second envoy arrived from Raja Drupada, saying:—"Perchance you have now become kinsmen of the Raja Drupada, and therefore he bids you honour his palace with your presence that he may entertain you as his guests." After him came a number of people with splendid chariots and horses, and besought the brethren to ascend the chariots and return with them to the city of

Dhrishta-dyumna follows his sister to the house of the Pándavas and discovers that they are Kshatriyas.

Raja Drupada sends his Purohita as Envoy to the Pándavas, and invites them to his palace.

Kámpilya; and Yudhishthira and his brethren proceeded in one chariot, whilst Kuntí took charge of Draupadí and went with her in a chariot by themselves.

Grand reception of the Pándavas by Raja Drupada.

Meantime all the people of the city came out to meet the men who had carried away the daughter of their Raja at her Swayamvara. Raja Drupada came out in like manner with all his ministers and Chieftains, and when they saw the chariots of the Pándavas approaching, they alighted as a mark of respect, and Yudhishthira and his brethren did the same, and they severally saluted each other, whilst Kuntí and Draupadí joined the ladies of the palace. Raja Drupada was soon satisfied in mind by the manners and bearing of the five brethren that they were true Kshatriyas, and he ordered his servants to conduct them to the bath and to give them royal robes. After this a grand feast was prepared in the banqueting-room, and served up on dishes of gold; and there Bhíma distinguished himself greatly by eating as much as all the rest of his brethren put together.

The Pándavas make known their birth and lineage.

When the feast was over, Raja Drupada bestowed many gifts upon the brethren; and he said to Yudhishthira:—"I know full well that you are illustrious Rajas, but tell me, I pray you, what are your names and lineage." Yudhishthira replied:—"We are poor people, and if you deem us unworthy to ally with you, we entreat you to do as it pleases you, for we seek not to constrain you." Drupada then said:—"I adjure you by the Almighty God to tell me who you are!" So Yudhishthira told him, saying:—"We are the sons of the Raja Pándu: I am Yudhishthira, and he who won your daughter is Arjuna; and the others are Bhíma, Nakula, and Sahadeva, and the lady who brought your daughter here to-day is our mother Kuntí. Then Raja Drupada knew them all, and was filled with joy; and they told him all that had happened to them from the day of their escape from the city of Váranávata; and the Raja ordered houses to be prepared for their reception, and entertained them many days.

Joy of Raja Drupada.

Yudhishthira, as the eldest brother, requested to settle the marriage.

After this Raja Drupada said to Yudhishthira:—"Is it your command, as the elder brother, that I give my

daughter in marriage to Arjuna?" And Yudhishthira replied:—"We must ask counsel of the sage Vyása in this matter." Now on that day the sage Vyása had come to the city, and he was received by Raja Drupada with all honour and reverence, and seated upon a golden throne; and all the princes and chieftains stood before him with clasped hands. Then the sage Vyása bade each one to take his seat, and they began to take counsel together respecting the marriage of Draupadí. And Raja Drupada said:—"Arjuna has won my daughter at her Swayamvara, and it is for the elder brother Yudhishthira to say what shall be done." Vyása replied:—"The destiny of Draupadí has already been declared by the gods; Let her become the wife of all the brethren." Dhrishta-dyumna then said:—"It is not for me to speak in the presence of a great sage, but it seems to me that according to the rule of the Swayamvara, my sister Draupadí is already the wife of Arjuna, and it is not permitted for the elder brother to interfere in her marriage." Yudhishthira replied:—"Your words may be true, but what Vyása has said is just, and my conscience condemns it not; and moreover we hold our mother's word to be right and true, that we should all share the prize that Arjuna had won." The sage Vyása then explained to Raja Drupada, that it was ordained by a divine mystery that his daughter Draupadí should be married to the five brethren, and the Raja gave his consent. And Draupadí was arrayed in fine garments, and adorned with five jewels, and married first to the elder brother Yudhishthira, and then to the others according to their respective ages; and the Raja gave large gifts to his sons-in-law, and also to the Bráhmans; and Kuntí blessed her daughter-in-law, and prayed that she might become the mother of many sons. Then the Pándavas were no longer afraid lest they should be discovered by the Kauravas, and they dwelt for many days in much joy and tranquillity in the city of Kámpilya.

Vyása appears and is received with great reverence.

Declares that Draupadí must marry the five brethren.

Objections of Dhrishta-dyumna.

Yudhishthira's appeal to his conscience.

Marriage of Draupadí to the five Pándavas.

Meantime the Kauravas heard that the Pándavas were alive and had married the daughter of Raja Drupada, and they began to be afraid. And a Council was held in the Hall of

Alarm of the Kauravas.

the palace, and all the elders spoke in favour of peace, whilst the young men were clamorous for war. Then Bhíshma urged that the Raj should be divided between the Kauravas and the Pándavas, and his counsel prevailed. And Vidura went forth to the city of Kámpilya and brought back the Pándavas to the city of Hastinápur; and all the people of the Raj rejoiced greatly at the return of the sons of Raja Pándu.

Return of the Pándavas to Hastinápur and division of the Raj.

The foregoing legend of the Swayamvara of Draupadí is perhaps one of the most valuable, as it certainly is one of the most remarkable, which have been preserved in the Mahá Bhárata. The event to which it refers belongs to the very earliest period of Hindú history; and illustrates to a very suggestive degree the rude civilization which prevailed amongst the earliest Aryan settlers in India. In the narrative already before the reader, a considerable amount of mythical rubbish, respecting which there could not possibly be two opinions, has already been eliminated; and now it remains to clear away with a more delicate hand those further details which still encumber the authentic tradition, but which could not have been excluded from the text without impairing the significance of the legend as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata.

Review of the foregoing tradition.

The marriage of Draupadí referred to the earliest period in Hindú history.

Tradition obscured by mythical additions.

The event which forms the germ of the later narrative was probably of the following character. Panchála was a little Raj at no great distance from the Raj of Bhárata. The Raja of Panchála had a marriageable daughter whom he determined to give to the best archer who might compete for her hand. Accordingly he gave a feast to a number of young men from the neighbouring families, in some pleasant spot which was adorned for the occasion with gay

Probable details of the real incident.

The Raja of Pánchála gives a feast, at which he intends marrying his daughter to the best archer.

flags and flowers. When the feast was over the priests chaunted their mystic hymns to the gods; after which the damsel was duly presented to the assembly by her brother, and the young men were invited to try their skill with the bow. Here there was a significant pause. No one liked to shoot first lest he should be laughed at by the others; for every man who missed the mark lost all chance of the damsel, and would thus become the natural butt of a rude and boisterous crowd. At length the young men took heart and began to shoot; and meantime the damsel moved amongst them in a very simple fashion, carrying in her hand the garland of flowers which she was to throw round the neck of the successful bowman. Probably she knew most of the young men, and took not unnaturally an interest in their performances. Nor was she altogether a passive spectator; for whilst womanly pride would lead her to accept the victor as her future husband, she evidently possessed the right of rejecting an objectionable suitor, a right which she exercised in the case of Karna.

Rude merriment of the occasion.

Simplicity of the Raja's daughter in moving amongst her suitors.

Exercises the right of excluding an unwelcome suitor from the trial.

Here it may be remarked that the cool and self-possessed demeanour of Draupadí on this occasion is precisely what might have been expected in a state of society where polyandry was a recognized institution, and where the woman was to a great extent the master. In Swayamvaras of a later date the conduct of the damsel seems to have been more in accordance with the idea of one wife being married to one husband; and pictures are presented of a timid maiden moving modestly round a circle of young men, accompanied by a nurse or a father, to assist her in the delicate task of choosing a husband.

Self-possessed demeanour of Draupadi an indication of polyandry.

Modest appearance of damsels in later Swayamvaras.

The main incident in the story, and the one which may have served to perpetuate the memory of the Swayamvara, was not so much the fact that Arjuna won the hand of Draupadí by hitting the mark, as the fact that the people all supposed him to be the son of a Bráhman. The disdain with which the ancient Kshatriyas regarded the mendicant Bráhmans, presents so extraordinary a contrast to the superstitious respect with which the modern Bráhman caste is universally regarded, as to necessitate an inquiry into its cause. Originally the father of a family, or the Chieftain of a tribe, appear to have acted as priest at the family or tribal sacrifices; just as Noah, Abraham, and Melchizedek offered up sacrifices to Jehovah with their own hands. Under such circumstances, when priests were first engaged to act for the father or the Chieftain, it would be in the capacity of hired servants; and a lengthened period would elapse before the mercenary priests could obtain such a superstitious hold upon the people, as to be considered of a higher grade than their royal masters. At the same time, it would seem that the Bráhmans had already formed themselves into a separate community, who never practised the use of arms, and whose lives were already considered as sacred by the Kshatriyas.

Winning of the prize by an apparent Bráhman the main incident in the tradition.

Cause of the ancient disdain in which the Bráhmans were held by the Kshatriyas.

The priest originally a hireling engaged to act for the patriarch or Chieftain.

The surprise of the multitude at seeing a Bráhman attempt to compete at a Swayamvara, the fears of the obsequious Bráhmans lest the Kshatriyas should be offended at the presumption of one of their order, the exultant delight of the Bráhmans when Arjuna struck the golden fish, and the violent wrath of the Kshatriyas at seeing themselves distanced by a mendicant priest who lived upon their bounty, are

General commotion excited at the success of a mendicant Bráhman when the Kshatriyas had all failed.

incidents in the authentic tradition which can now be realized with ease. But the Kshatriyas had another cause for exasperation. They suspected that Raja Drupada had invited them for the express purpose of humiliating them in the eyes of the people; and in this exasperated mood they threatened to slay the whole house of Drupada and to burn his daughter alive upon the funeral pile. The mythical interposition of Krishna upon this occasion will be considered hereafter. For the present it will be sufficient to note the circumstances that followed, and inquire how far they bear out the view that polyandry was a recognized institution, and that the marriage of Draupadí was not such an exceptional case as the Brahmanical compilers have induced the Hindús to believe.

The Swayamvara and polyandry compared.

According to the law of the later Swayamvara, the man who gained the day became the husband of the damsel. According to the institution of polyandry, the eldest brother married the damsel, who thereupon became the joint wife of all the brethren.

Plain indications of polyandry as an institution in the narrative of events immediately succeeding the Swayamvara.

It will now be observed that the remaining portion of the narrative of the marriage of Draupadí is unintelligible, unless the theory be accepted that polyandry was a recognized institution, and that all representations to the contrary are to be regarded as mythical interpolations of a later date. In the story of the Swayamvara only glimpses are to be obtained of the authentic tradition; but in the narrative of events between the Swayamvara and the marriage, scenes are described so natural in their character, and so precisely in accord with the institution of polyandry, that it is impossible to doubt the existence of the institution.

Scene on the arrival of the Pándavas and Draupadí at the house of Kuntí.

According to the tradition as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, the Pándavas conducted Draupadí to the house of their mother Kuntí, and told Kuntí that they had gained an acquisition; upon which Kuntí desired the brethren to share the acquisition amongst themselves. Here an undue stress has been laid upon the words of Kuntí by the Brahmanical compilers. Kuntí is said to have been under the impression that her sons had brought home a large stock of provisions, and therefore commanded them to share the food equally amongst them. It is also added that when she discovered that they had brought home a damsel, she repented of her words, as being opposed to religion and morality; but that she could not recall her commands, because having once issued them her sons were bound to obey. This is palpably a Brahmanical interpolation. The brethren were not accustomed to divide provisions, for that duty was always performed by their mother. Moreover, they did not share the provisions, for one half went to Bhíma, and the remaining half sufficed for all the others. Again, Kuntí could scarcely have spoken to her sons without seeing Draupadí also; and, again, it is mere Brahmanical jesuitry to infer from the law that the commands of a mother are always to be obeyed, the childish fallacy that a mother cannot recall or modify her commands. It is, therefore, safer to adopt the more natural interpretation, namely, that the Pándavas took Draupadí home to their mother, and told her that Arjuna had won the damsel at her Swayamvara; and that Kuntí had then desired her sons to share the damsel amongst them as their joint wife, according to the institution of polyandry.

Brahmanical perversion of the words of Kuntí.

Proofs of Brahmanical interpolation.

Natural interpretation that Kuntí directed her sons to share Draupadí amongst them.

The sequel of this tradition entirely bears out this interpretation. It can be reconciled with the theory that the marriage of one wife to many brothers was an existing institution, but not with the view which the Brahmanical compilers have endeavoured to convey, namely, that such a marriage was so exceptional as to be a shock to the social sentiments of the period. Arjuna took Draupadí by the hand and laid her at the feet of Kuntí; and then plainly indicated the right of the eldest brother to choose a wife for the family by declaring that Draupadí was worthy of being espoused by Yudhishthira. It is also stated that every one of the brothers felt an equal desire to marry Draupadí; but remembering that her father Drupada had some voice in the matter, they considered it advisable to delay the actual marriage until the Raja could be consulted. Accordingly, Draupadí seems to have been treated during the interval as a damsel who was virtually betrothed to all the brothers, though not actually married. Thus when the victuals were prepared for the evening meal, Kuntí resigned her duty of dividing the food to her new daughter-in-law, according to the accustomed form; and Draupadí seems to have undertaken the duty with all the self-confidence of a lady who was henceforth to occupy the most important place in the household. She distributed the victuals to her husbands expectant, and smiled as she gave so large a proportion to the voracious Bhíma. When the evening meal was over, Draupadí retired with her mother-in-law, and slept by her side all night; a natural arrangement which precisely coincided with the extraordinary relations in which she stood towards the

Natural interpretation confirmed by the sequel of the tradition.

Acknowledgment of the right of the elder brother to choose a wife for the family.

Marriage rites deferred until Raja Drupada could be consulted.

Draupadi treated during the interval as a damsel betrothed to all five brothers.

Divides the victuals at supper, in the place of Kunti.

Arrangements for the night.

family. The careful delicacy of Hindú bards as regards betrothed maidens is also exhibited in describing the next day. Yudhishthira and his brethren proceeded to the city of Kámpilya in one chariot, whilst Kuntí and Draupadí were conveyed in a chariot by themselves. The remainder of the story calls for no remark. The rights of Yudhishthira as the eldest brother were fully recognized by Raja Drupada; and with the exception of a few mythical objections, none of which were raised by Draupadí, the narrative of the marriage of one damsel to five brethren reaches a natural conclusion.

Mythical stories in connection with Vyása introduced to wipe away the stain of polyandry from the early traditions of the Hindús.

Myth of the woman who prayed five times to Siva for a good husband.

The Brahmanical myths which have been introduced in the Mahá Bhárata for the purpose of explaining away the polyandry may now be very briefly indicated. When the Pándavas were on the point of setting out for the Swayamvara, the mythical Vyása suddenly appeared to them, and told them a ridiculous story of a woman who prayed to the great god Siva five times for a good husband; upon which the god said that as she had prayed five times, he would give her five husbands in a future birth. Vyása added that this woman had been born again as Draupadí, and that the five brethren were destined to marry her. Again, when Raja Drupada was conversing with Yudhishthira about the marriage, Vyása makes his appearance in a very abrupt manner; and the mythical reception accorded to the sage, the enthronement upon a golden seat with all the Chieftains standing round him with clasped hands in token of reverence, furnishes a significant contrast to the mortification which Raja Drupada had expressed in a previous portion of the more authentic tradition at seeing his daughter Draupadí led away

by a Bráhman. On this occasion Vyása again repeated the divine story, and also related another myth to the effect that the five Pándavas were in reality five Indras, or five incarnations of Indra, and consequently the same as one man. Raja Drupada and the Pándavas are of course represented as being perfectly satisfied with these absurd explanations.[2]

Myth that the five Pándavas were five Indras.

Objection of Dhrishta-dyumna, that the claim of Arjuna as the winner at the Swayamvara, set aside the right of Yudhishthira as eldest brother.

One objection, however, was raised against the proposed marriage, which is more worthy of notice. Dhrishta-dyumna is said to have urged that Arjuna had fairly won Draupadí at her Swayamvara, and that therefore Yudhishthira had no right to interfere in the matter. This objection was answered by Yudhishthira himself, as it directly affected his rights as the eldest brother. Yudhishthira appealed to his mythical birth as being an incarnation of Dharma, or virtue;[3] and declared that if the proposed marriage had been repugnant to religion it would have been equally repugnant to his own conscience. This strained defence made by Yudhishthira, although palpably mythical, seems to indicate that there was some force in the objection, and that there was some

Significance of the objection.

[2] The myths indicated in the text occupy a very considerable space in the Mahá Bhárata, but they are so wild and unmeaning, so palpably the depraved products of diseased imagination, that it would be worse than useless to reproduce them at length. Draupadí is said to have been an incarnation of the goddess Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu; and she and her brother Dhrishta-dyumna were not born in the natural way, but were produced from a sacrificial fire kindled for the purpose by a holy Rishi. As for the myth of the five Pándavas being five Indras, it is simply trash. It is based upon the legend already referred to in the foot-note at page 70, which gives a divine origin to the Pándavas, and especially states that Indra was the father of Arjuna. By some untranslatable process a portion of Indra's energy becomes transfused into the fathers of the other four Pándavas, and thus all the five Pándavas are declared to be his incarnations. The myth, however, is not only absurd in itself, but fails of its intended object; for whether the Pándavas were the sons of Indra, or the sons of different gods, the fact still remains that three of the brothers were born of one mother, and two of them of another mother, and that all of them were married to one wife.

[3] See *ante*, p. 126.

opposition between the institution of polyandry and that of the Swayamvara. The question is certainly one of difficulty, for it is by no means impossible that the institution of the Swayamvara was of a more modern origin than the institution of polyandry, and that the narrative of the Swayamvara might have been introduced at a later period to cover the polyandry. The question, however, is not an important one, and may be left in the uncertainty from which it cannot be cleared.

Question of whether the Swayamvara did not belong to a later period.

Two remaining points in the tradition, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, are also deserving of notice. A catalogue of all the Rajas present at the Swayamvara has been preserved, but it is so palpably the product of a later age that it is useless for purposes of criticism. Sovereigns from the remotest quarters of India are said to have attended this little domestic festival; until it would seem as if the names of the ancestral heroes of every Raja throughout the Indian continent, real and mythical, had been inserted in the list of suitors by the Bráhmanical compilers. The task of interpolation was indeed easy, whilst every reigning Chieftain would be highly gratified at finding that his ancestor was associated with the heroes of the Mahá Bhárata, and had been a candidate for the hand of the heroine of the national Epic.

List of the Rajas who attended the Swayamvara of Draupadi; its mythical character.

The interference of Krishna seems to be another myth, which is connected with the later worship of that hero. One object of the Brahmanical compilers was to promulgate the worship of Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu. Accordingly the rude and amorous warrior of the Yádava tribe is frequently introduced in the Mahá Bhárata as a

Mediation of Krishna; its mythical character.

mediator in times of feud, and a consoler in times of affliction. Of course it is not altogether impossible for Krishna to have been present at the Swayamvara, or for him to have interposed to allay the wrath of the disappointed Kshatriyas; but the distance from Dwáraká to the scene of the tradition, and the rude character of Krishna as displayed in the earlier traditions, militate very strongly against the truth of the legend.

No further allusion to the exceptional character of the marriage.

The narrative of the Swayamvara of Draupadí having been brought to a legitimate conclusion by her marriage, no further allusion is made to the exceptional nature of the union. Henceforth the significance of the alliance wholly turns upon the happy effects which it produced upon the fortunes of the Pándavas. Indeed, there are indications in the Mahá Bhárata that the marriage was a planned thing. Raja Drupada must have been equally as desirous of the assistance of the Pándavas in revenging himself upon Drona, as the Pándavas had been desirous of an alliance with Drupada to enable them to recover possession of the Raj. It is accordingly said that Drupada purposely selected the huge bow with which the feat of shooting the golden fish was performed, in the hope that he might thus gain Arjuna for a son-in-law, inasmuch as no one but Arjuna would be strong enough to string the bow. But the question is scarcely worth the trouble of weighing probabilities. It will be sufficient to say that the Kauravas were much alarmed at the alliance; and that the Maháraja summoned a Council to consider what steps should be taken to meet the crisis which had occurred.

Significance of the alliance, as promoting the fortunes of the Pándavas.

Alarm of the Kauravas at the alliance.

The ancient Councils of the Kshatriyas present a strange interest, inasmuch as they formed the germ

from which the European Parliaments of the Middle Ages undoubtedly sprang, and they still linger in Hindú capitals under the name of Durbars. Unfortunately, the speeches which have been preserved in the Mahá Bhárata are rarely characterized by the fire and dignity which is breathed from the lips of Homeric heroes; and are wholly wanting in that vigorous thought which finds expression in the orations which appear in Thucydides. Indeed, they have passed through a very different crucible, and are little better than childish conversations, not unfrequently lengthened out with Brahmanical details. But still the scene which transpired in the rude entrance Hall of the palace at Hastinápur is very suggestive. All the Chieftains of the royal house are said to have assembled on the occasion adorned with garlands. There were the grave elders desirous of peace, and the turbulent youths who were clamorous for war; whilst the weak and indulgent Maháraja sat in their midst, his viewless orbs hopelessly turned upon the assembly. Bhíshma, the patriarch of the house, at length proposed that the Pándavas should be invited to return to Hastinápur, and that the Raj should then be divided between the sons of Dhritaráshtra and the sons of Pándu. This counsel is said to have prevailed. Vidura was sent to bring the Pándavas and their wife to Hastinápur; and Raja Drupada, in behalf of his sons-in-law, was induced to agree to the terms of reconciliation. Accordingly, the Pándavas set out for Hastinápur accompanied by their mother and joint wife; and all the people of the Raj rejoiced greatly at the return of the sons of Raja Pándu, and went out in great multitudes to welcome them back to the house of their fathers.

Primitive character of the ancient Councils of the Kshatriyas.

Inferiority of the speeches to those in Homer and Thucydides.

Scene in the Council-hall at Hastinápur.

Bhíshma proposes a division of the Raj between the Kauravas and the Pándavas.

Return of the Pándavas to Hastinápur.

CHAPTER V.

REIGN OF THE PÁNDAVAS IN KHÁNDAVA-PRASTHA.

THE division of the Raj of Bhárata indicates an important event in the history of the Aryan invasion of India. It was not so much a division of territory, as a division of the family, and perchance to some extent a division of the people; one branch remaining at Hastinápur, whilst the other went out to wrest a new country from the aborigines, and clear and cultivate the lands. It has already been seen that the Raj of Hastinápur was in reality nothing more than a certain area of cultivated lands and pastures, which furnished subsistence for a band of Aryan settlers under the rule of the Mahárája. It will now be seen that the so-called division was a migration; that the Pándavas, accompanied perhaps by servants or retainers, departed out of the country on the banks of the Ganges, and proceeded to a country on the banks of the Jumná, where they cleared the jungle, and established a Raj of their own. Before proceeding further, however, it will be necessary to reproduce the legend of the migration.

True nature of the division of the Raj; not a division of territory, but a division of the family.

Tradition of the migration of the Pándavas to the country of Khándava-prastha.

After many days Mahárája Dhritaráshta sent for Yudhishthira and his brethren, and said to them in the presence of Bhíshma:—"It is most proper for you to go to the country of Khándava-prastha, and I will make over to you the half of the Raj." And Bhíshma said:—"The Mahárája

has spoken well; so go now and dwell in the country of Khándava-prastha, and take charge of your share of the Raj." So the Pándavas took their leave of the Mahárája, and of Bhíshma, and of Drona, and of all their kinsmen, and proceeded toward the south until they came to the country of Khándava-prastha on the banks of the river Jumná; and there they built a fort, and collected such a number of inhabitants that the city resembled the city of Indra, and the city was named Indra-prastha. And the Raj of Yudhishthira and his brethren became famous throughout the world, for they punished all evil-doers, and subdued all the robbers round about them, and any one who suffered wrong went to them for succour, like children going to a father.

Pándavas found the city of Indra-prastha on the Jumná.

Their famous administration.

The first difficulty that occurs in the foregoing tradition is the confusion which exists between the division of the Raj and the migration of the Pándavas. This confusion probably originated in the application of the name of Bhárata, not to any particular Aryan settlement, but to the aggregate of settlements, and probably to an indefinite tract of unknown and unsubdued country beyond; and thus it was that the term Bhárata-varsha became gradually applied to the whole of India. Under such circumstances the Mahárája might have made over to Pándavas the forest of Khándava, as a portion of the assumed empire of Bhárata; but after the Pándavas had once cleared the land, and established themselves in the country, the new Raj would be emphatically their own.

Origin of the confusion between the division of the Raj and the migration of the Pándavas.

A second difficulty in the tradition arises from an omission which is not without significance. The Pándavas had evidently migrated into a new country, and yet nothing whatever is said about the clearing of the jungle. Now it is difficult to conceive that such an important event should have

Omission in the tradition of all reference to the clearing of the jungle.

found no place in the original tradition; and yet if it had been preserved in its integrity by the later compilers, it would have undoubtedly militated against two deeply-rooted ideas, namely, that the Raj of Bhárata extended over the whole of India, and that the Kshatriyas were warriors who never stooped to the cultivation of the soil. In a later portion of the story, however, a myth has been preserved, which is entitled, "The Burning of the Forest of Khándava;" and notwithstanding the wild and absurd details of the story, it sufficiently indicates the true character of the Aryan invasion, and the occupations of the early Kshatriya settlers.[1] The essential portions of the myth may now be related as follows:—

Memory of the incident preserved in a later myth.

Myth of the burning of the forest of Khándava.

Arjuna and Krishna hunt in the forest.

Now it came to pass that Krishna paid a visit to the Pándavas at Indra-prastha, and Arjuna invited him to go out hunting in the great forest of Khándava. So everything was made ready, and Arjuna went out with Krishna to hunt in the great forest; and when they came to a pleasant spot they sat down and drank wine, whilst the musicians played before them, and the singers and story-tellers amused them with songs and stories. At length on a certain day a Bráhman came to Krishna and Arjuna; and he was very large and fat, and his colour was yellow, and his form was frightful to behold; but when Krishna and Arjuna saw the Bráhman they received him with great respect, and seated him beside themselves. The Bráhman then said:—"I am Agni (fire), and a great Rishi has offered sacrifice and poured oil upon the altar for the space of twelve years, so that my strength is gone and my colour has become yellow from drinking up the oil: I therefore desired to consume the great forest of Khándava, so that my strength and colour

Mythical appearance of the god Agni (fire), who desires to devour the forest.

[1] The myth of "The Burning of the Forest of Khándava" is not related in the Mahá Bhárata, until after the mythical exile of Arjuna, which will appear hereafter.

might return again to me; but whenever I began to devour the forest, Indra poured down abundance of rain and quenched the fire, for he is desirous of preserving the great serpents who are dwelling in that jungle: I therefore beseech you, O Krishna and Arjuna, to protect me against Indra." At these words Arjuna agreed to make war against Indra, if Agni would provide him with celestial weapons; and Agni then gave Arjuna the bow which is called Gándíva, together with two quivers, and a chariot having the monkey god for its standard. Then Arjuna and Krishna fought Indra, and Agni devoured the forest of Khándava; and all the serpents were devoured likewise, excepting their Raja Takshaka, who escaped from the burning.

Opposition of Indra as the ally of the Nágas, or serpents.

Arjuna and Krishna fight against Indra, and Agni devours the forest.

The meaning of this myth, as far as it bears upon the clearing of the forest, will now be obvious. A Scythic tribe of Nágas were located in the jungle of Khándava, and naturally objected to the conflagration, which was, however, ultimately carried out. The actual burning of the forest, and war against the Scythic Nágas, seem to have been famous in Kshatriya tradition; and hence the gods and Bráhmans, and especially Krishna, were associated with it. There is also a religious meaning in the myth which will be discussed hereafter.

Interpretation of the myth; the burning of the forest opposed by the Scythic Nágas.

The migration of a branch of Kshatriya settlers from the banks of the Ganges to the banks of the Jumná is also interesting from another point of view. It seems to indicate that whilst one band of Aryan colonists moved towards the south-east along the valley of the Ganges, another band moved in the same direction along the valley of the Jumná. Again, the site of Indra-prastha is far more distinctly indicated than the site of Hastinápur. The pilgrim who wends his way from the modern city of Delhi to pay a visit to the strange relics of the ancient

Progress of two bands of Aryans towards the south-east, one along the valley of the Ganges, and the other along the valley of the Jumná.

Remains of the ancient city of Indra-prastha between Delhi and the Kútub.

world which surround the mysterious Kútub, will find on either side of his road a number of desolate heaps, the *débris* of thousands of years, the remains of successive capitals which date back to the very dawn of history; and local tradition still points to these sepulchres of departed ages as the sole remains of the Raj of the sons of Pándu, and their once famous city of Indra-prastha.[2]

The next point in the tradition which calls for observation, is the strange domestic life which accompanied the institution of polyandry. The tradition needs no introduction, but may be briefly related here :—

Legend of the five houses of the Pándavas.

Now as the five Pándavas were husbands of one wife, each of the brethren had a house and garden of his own, and Draupadí dwelt with each of them in turn for two days at a time; and it was a law amongst them, that if a brother entered the house of another brother, whilst Draupadí was dwelling there, he should depart out of the city and go into exile for twelve years. Now it so happened that all the weapons belonging to the brethren were kept in the house of Yudhishthira; and it came to pass that one night whilst Draupadí was dwelling with Yudhishthira, a Bráhman came with a loud outcry to the gate of Arjuna, and prayed for vengeance against a band of robbers who had carried away his cows. And the Bráhman was very clamorous, and Arjuna himself was very desirous to pursue the robbers. So Arjuna entered the house of Yudhishthira, and girded on his own coat of mail, and tied on his sword and buckler, and took his bow and arrows in his hand; and he overtook the robbers and slew some of them, and the remainder fled and left the

Matrimonial law.

Alleged breach of the law by Arjuna.

[2] The whole of this neighbourhood is rich in historic association; and the journey from Delhi to the Kútub, and from the Kútub to Toglukabad, is perhaps one of the most interesting in India. At Toglukabad is the first great outpost of the Mussulman Afghans. The Kútub is a pillar of Islam victory erected amidst the remains of what was once a famous Buddhist city. Modern Delhi, again, was the great metropolis of the Mogul emperors.

cattle behind them. And Arjuna brought away the cattle and delivered them up to the Bráhman; and in the morning he went to Yudhishthira and told him all that he had done; and he requested permission to take his leave and go into exile for twelve years according to the rule. And Yudhishthira was much troubled, and said:—"You have done no harm, Arjuna, for I am your elder brother, and the same to you as a father: If indeed I had entered your house when Draupadí was there, then I should have been bound to go out of the city for twelve years; but when you entered my house, it was to you as the dwelling of your father; and I pray you therefore to think no more of the matter." But Arjuna replied:—"When we pledged ourselves by oath to this rule, nothing was said about the house of the elder brother being as the house of a father, and I am bound to depart out of the city." And Arjuna took his leave of his mother and brethren, and of his wife Draupadí, and set his face towards the jungle.

Arjuna accepts the penalty of twelve years' exile.

Jesuitical remonstrances of Yudhishthira.

Arjuna goes into exile.

The question of how far the matrimonial law above indicated is historically true, can scarcely be discussed with minuteness by the modern historian. There is, however, sufficient evidence to excite the suspicion that it is purely mythical, and that it has been introduced for the sole purpose of toning down the more offensive features of the marriage. It is said to have originated with a famous Bráhman sage named Nárada, who abruptly introduced himself to the five brethren for the purpose of laying down the rule.[3] The point, however, which is really deserving of notice, is the obligation which each of the brothers imposed upon himself, of going into

Dubious authenticity of the matrimonial law.

[3] The story of the intervention of Nárada is amusing enough, but scarcely fitted for European eyes. He is said to have been received with every mark of honour and reverence, by Draupadí as well as by her husbands; but the sage had the delicacy to signal to Draupadí to leave the room, whilst he discussed with her husbands the propriety of their accepting the arrangement which he proposed.

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exile for twelve years in the event of any breach of the rule. Abundant evidence can be furnished that the exile is a myth. It is improbable that all the weapons should have been kept in the house of Yudhishthira whilst the matrimonial law was in force. It is improbable that Arjuna should have gone out single-handed against a band of robbers. The sophistry which Yudhishthira employs to persuade his brother to ignore the law is foreign to the character of the speaker, and is probably the interpolation of some jesuitical Bráhman. The period of twelve years is an obvious exaggeration. Moreover, it will presently be seen that the whole narrative of Arjuna's exile is crowded with details which are either supernatural, or Brahmanical, or an outrage upon geographical knowledge. The reason for the myth is, however, sufficiently obvious. Since Nárada the sage is said to have laid down the rule, it became necessary to show that the rule was faithfully observed, and this observance could only be indicated by an alleged breach of the rule.

Proofs that the matrimonial law is a myth.

The narrative of the adventures of Arjuna during his twelve years of exile is evidently the work of one of the later Brahmanical "arrangers." It consists of pilgrimages to the most holy Brahmanical localities, accompanied by a crowd of Brahmanical sages, who are palpably supernumeraries. It also includes three different amours in the three most remote quarters of India, namely, Hurdwar, in the extreme north; Munnipúr, in the extreme east beyond the Bengal frontier; and Dwáraká, in the extreme west, at the furthest end of the peninsula of Guzerat. Moreover, whilst the Brahmanical compilers have industriously filled up the time as regards

Arjuna's exile; its mythical character.

Pilgrimages to sacred Brahmanical places accompanied by a crowd of Bráhmans.

Amours in the remotest quarters of India.

Arjuna, they have neglected to record a single fact as regards his wife and four brethren; and the state of affairs at the end of the twelve long years is precisely the same as at the commencement of the exile. This mythical character will be rendered still more evident by a brief relation of the adventures which are said to have befallen Arjuna during his absence from Indra-prastha. For the convenience of comment the narrative of the exile may be divided into two portions; the first comprising the adventures prior to Arjuna's visit to Krishna, and the second embracing the legend of Arjuna's marriage to Krishna's sister. The first portion of the legend is as follows:—

Legend of Arjuna's adventures during his exile.

Now many Bráhmans went with Arjuna, and he made pilgrimages to all the holy places, and he went to Hurdwar on the river Ganges, and bathed there; and a damsel named Ulúpí, the daughter of Vásuki, the Raja of the Nágas, was likewise bathing there, and she saw Arjuna and besought him to espouse her, and he abode with her many days. After this Arjuna went into the countries of the south, and proceeded to the Mahendra mountain, and received many praises from Parasu Ráma, who dwelt there; and Parasu Ráma gave Arjuna many powerful weapons, and taught him many wondrous things in the use of arms.[4]

Amour with Ulúpí.

Visit to Parasu Ráma.

Marries the daughter of the Raja of Manipura.

And Arjuna passed through many cities and peoples, until he came to the city of Manipura, and there the daughter of the Raja, whose name was Chitrángada, chanced to see him, and desired him for her husband. So she contrived that he should see her, for she was exceedingly beautiful; and when Arjuna saw Chitrángada he loved her likewise, and made himself known to the Raja of Manipura,

[4] Mahendra is the chain of hills that extends along the eastern or Coromandel coast of India from Orissa and the Northern Circars to Gondwana; part of this chain near Ganjam is still called Mahindra Malei, or the hills of Mahindra. (See Wilson's *note* to Vishnu Purána, p. 174.) Parasu Ráma was peculiarly a hero of the Bráhmans, and the myths respecting him will be found in another place.

and demanded his daughter in marriage. The Raja replied: —"Chitrángada is my only child, and the great god Síva has ordained that neither I, nor the Rajas of Manipura who were before me, nor those who will come after me, shall have more than one child, be it a lad or a damsel: If therefore I give you my daughter in marriage, you must give to me any son that she may bear to you, that he may succeed in the Raj." So Arjuna pledged his word to the Raja and married Chitrángada, and she gave birth to a son who was named Babhru-váhana; and Arjuna dwelt at Manipura for three years.

Proceeds to Prabhása, near Dwáraká.

After this Arjuna took leave of his wife and son and departed out of Manipura, and travelled through many regions until he came to the holy place named Prabhása, which is nigh unto Dwáraká, where he met Krishna, and the other Chieftains of the Yádava tribe, who were reigning there.

Review of the legend of Arjuna's adventures.

The foregoing legend of the exile of Arjuna comprises a few significant incidents, which demand special consideration. The intimation that he was accompanied by many Bráhmans, and that he made pilgrimages to all the holy places, is apparently a general statement, having for its object the conversion of Arjuna into a Bráhman hero, piously attentive to all Brahmanical observances and ordinances. But the stories of his amours were introduced for a different purpose, though still having the same ultimate object in view. They have been apparently incorporated with the Mahá Bhárata, for the purpose of representing Arjuna as the ancestor of certain Rajas of a powerful Scythian race, known as the Nágas, whose history is deeply interwoven with that of the Hindús. These Scythic Nágas worshipped the serpent as a national deity, and adopted it as a national emblem, and from these circumstances they appear to have derived the name of Nágas, or

Conversion of Arjuna into a Bráhman hero.

Amours of Arjuna introduced to represent him as the ancestor of the Nága Rajas.

Prominent part taken by the Scythic Nágas in the history of ancient India.

serpents. The seats of these Nágas were not confined to India, for they have left traces of their belief in almost every religious system, as well as in almost every country in the ancient world. They appear to have entered India at some remote period, and to have pushed their way towards the east and south; but whether they preceded the Aryans, or whether they followed the Aryans, is a point which has not yet been decided. In process of time these Nágas became identified with serpents, and the result has been a strange confusion in the ancient myths between serpents and human beings; between the deity and emblem of the Nágas and the Nágas themselves.[5]

Confusion between the Nágas as serpents, and the Nágas as Scythians.

The great historic fact in connection with the Nágas, which stands prominently forward in Hindú myths, is the fierce persecution which they suffered at the hands of the Bráhmans. The destruction of serpents at the burning of the forest of Khándava, the terrible sacrifice of serpents which forms one of the opening scenes in the Maḥá Bhárata, and the supernatural exploits of the youthful Krishna against the serpents sent to destroy him, are all expressions of Brahmanical hatred towards the Nágas. Ultimately this antagonism merged into that deadly con-

Ancient conflict between the Bráhmans and the Nágas merged in the later religious wars between the Bráhmans and the Buddhists.

[5] See some interesting notices of the Nágas in Elliot's *Supplementary Glossary*, art. *Gourtuga*. Sir H. M. Elliot observes that the Nágas extended their usurpations to the Magadhá empire of Bahar, the throne of which was held by the Nág or serpent dynasty for ten generations. A branch of them, the Nagbunsee chieftains of Ramgurh Sirgooja, have the lunettes of their serpent ancestor engraved on their signets in proof of their lineage; while the capital and district of Nagpore are called after their name.

It may be added that the whole of the Scythian race are mythically descended from a being half woman and half serpent, who bore three sons to Heracles (Herod. IV. 9, 10). It was no doubt from this creation that Milton borrowed his conception of sin. The serpents that are said to have invaded the kingdom of Lydians just before the downfall of Crœsus, were probably nothing more than Scythian Nágas (Herod. I.).

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flict between the Bráhman and the Buddhist, which after a lengthened period of religious warfare terminated in the triumph of the Bráhman. From these data it would appear that the Nágas were originally a race distinct from the Aryans, and wholly without the pale of Brahmanism; that those who became Buddhists were either crushed or driven out of India during the age of Brahmanical revival; and that the remainder have become converts to Brahmanism, and appear to be regarded as an inferior order of Kshatriyas.[6] But there is a vitality in certain religious ideas which seems to render them immortal; and whilst the Nágas as a people have almost disappeared from the Indian continent, the worship of serpents, or a reverential fear of serpents as divine beings, is still to be found deeply rooted in the mind of the Hindú. The general question perhaps properly belongs to the history of the Hindú religion; but it should be distinctly borne in mind whilst considering every legend which seems to point to the Nágas.[7]

The Nágas originally distinct from the Aryans, but are now either Buddhists or a lower order of Kshatriyas.

Existing remains of serpent worship.

The legend of Arjuna's amour with Ulúpí calls for no particular remark, excepting that according to the popular belief she was a real serpent, and not a Nága woman; and that she carried Arjuna away to the subterranean city of Bhogavatí, the mythical capital of the serpent empire. But Arjuna's amour with the daughter of the Raja of Manipura is of a more significant character. Manipura, the modern Munnipur, is

Amour of Arjuna with Ulúpi popularly regarded as one with a serpent maiden.

Significance of the myth of Arjuna's amour with the daughter of the Raja of Manipura.

[6] This is the opinion of Sir H. M. Elliot, and is confirmed by the present status of the Nága tribe in the neighbourhood of the Munnipur valley, who, whenever they profess Hindúism, at once receive the thread of the Kshatriya.—M'Culloch's *Account of Munnipore*, p. 18.

[7] Snake worship especially prevails in the northern and eastern districts of Bengal, and in the Madras Presidency, but is generally associated with the worship of Síva and Krishna.

a secluded valley lying between Eastern Bengal and Burmah; and the people appear to be a genuine relic of the ancient Nágas. They are a barbarous race, who have as yet learnt very little Brahmanism from their Hindú neighbours. They have no early marriages, and no ideas of Satí, and their widows remarry. The Raja's deity and ancestor is a serpent, and a cavity is shown in which the ancestral deity resides, and the throne of the Raja is fixed over the cavity. Whilst, however, the traditions and institutions of Munnipur are so widely different from those of Hindúism, the myth of Arjuna's marriage with the daughter of the Raja is widely known amongst the Munnipurees, and implicitly believed.[8]

The modern Munnipurees a genuine relic of the Scythic Nágas.

The concluding portion of the narrative of Arjuna's adventures now remains for consideration; and here the myth takes a pleasing form, for it becomes a story of mutual affection, and betrays a sentiment and feeling far in advance of the grosser details which appertain to Arjuna's temporary union with the Nága women. The scene of this charming romance is laid at Dwáraká, the chief city of the Yádavas, situated at the western extremity of the peninsula of Guzerat. According to the Mahá Bhárata, Arjuna had gone on a pilgrimage to Prab-

Legend of Arjuna's marriage with Subhadrá, the sister of Krishna.

[8] For the information respecting the Munnipurees I am indebted to the valuable report on Munnipur drawn up by the Political Agent, Colonel W. M'Culloch, who has resided many years at Munnipur. My acknowledgments are also due to Colonel M'Culloch for having furnished me direct with some valuable local information as regards the popularity of the myth of Arjuna's marriage amongst the inhabitants of the country. This myth is a very ancient one, for it finds a place in the Vishnu Purána, which cannot be of later origin than the tenth century; and it is somewhat remarkable that no traces of Bráhmanism can be found in Munnipur of an earlier date than the beginning of the last century. The myth, however, will reappear for consideration in the sequel of the tradition of the great war.

hása, a famous locality in the neighbourhood of Dwáraká, when he met with the adventures which are described in the following legend:—

Krishna receives Arjuna with great rejoicings at Dwáraká.

Now when Krishna heard of the approach of his kinsman Arjuna, he went out to meet him, and conducted him with great respect to his own house, and gave orders that the city of Dwáraká should be dressed out with flowers and banners and every sign of rejoicing; and he entertained Arjuna many days, and took him out every day to hunt or to ride.

Great feast on the Raivataka mountain.

And it came to pass that after a while Krishna held a great assembly on a beautiful mountain named Raivataka, which is nigh unto the city of Dwáraká; and he gave a great feast there to all the Chieftains and their ladies, but the ladies were entertained in a separate pavilion by themselves. On the first day of the feast, Krishna took Arjuna by the hand and led him over the mountain, and as they were walking together they came near to the assembly of ladies; and when the ladies saw Krishna they came up and spoke to him, and amongst them was Subhadrá, who was Krishna's sister.

Krishna and Arjuna fall in with the assembly of ladies.

Arjuna smitten with Subhadrá.

And Arjuna saw Subhadrá, and he was stricken with her great beauty and exceeding elegance, and he interchanged glances with her. And Krishna saw that he was stricken, and said:—"How can you, who wander in the habit of a pilgrim, cast your eyes upon the ladies, and so lose your heart?" Arjuna replied:—"When a beautiful figure strikes the eye it will captivate the heart, and so it was unwittingly with me:" and with these words he turned away.

Krishna promises to give Subhadrá in marriage to Arjuna.

Then Krishna took him by the hand, and said:—"This is my sister: If you wish to have her for your wife I will ask my father to give her to you." Arjuna replied:—"What happiness can equal that of the man who has your sister for his wife?" Then Krishna said:—"My elder brother Balaráma is desirous of giving this sister of mine to Duryodhana, but I will give her to you."

And the feast on the mountain lasted two days, and on the morning of the third day the Chieftains and the ladies prepared to return to Dwáraká. And Krishna took Arjuna

aside, and gave him his own chariot, and four horses as swift as the wind, and said to him:—"I present you with this sister of mine for your wife, with the entire consent of my father Vasudeva: Ascend the chariot and overtake my sister who is already on the road to Dwáraká, and mount her upon the chariot likewise, and drive away with all speed to your own country, that you may be at Indra-prastha before the news reaches the ears of my brother Balaráma." So Arjuna followed the counsel of Krishna, and he ascended the chariot, and proceeded along the road to Dwáraká until he overtook Subhadrá, who was riding in a chariot together with some other ladies; and he drove slowly along by the side on which Subhadrá was until he came close to her, and then leaping down he took hold of her hand, and lifted her out of her chariot into his own, and drove off with all speed along the road to Indra-prastha.

Krishna suggests to Arjuna that he should elope with Subhadrá.

Arjuna lifts Subhadrá into his chariot, and drives away towards Indra-prastha.

Then the people who saw what Arjuna had done, set up a loud cry; and some of them hastened to Dwáraká, and entered the place of Council where Krishna and Balaráma, and their father Vasudeva, and the other Chieftains were sitting together, and told how Arjuna had carried away the daughter of Vasudeva. And Balaráma was exceedingly wroth, and he ordered his servants to mount their horses, and set out to pursue Arjuna; but seeing that Krishna showed no concern, he said to him:—"As you are not affected at hearing that Arjuna has carried away Subhadrá, it must have been done with your consent: But it was not lawful for you to give away our sister without speaking a word to me; and Arjuna carries his death with him, for I will surely follow him, and slay him, and all his kindred." Krishna replied:—"Why, my brother, make all this stir? Arjuna is a kinsman of ours, and his family is of the noblest, and endowed with every estimable quality: What disgrace then can it be to us that Arjuna should have our sister for his wife? Whereas, if you go and bring her back, who else will espouse her after she has been in the house of another man? So in this case, therefore, it is well to show no concern, and to send messengers to Arjuna and bid him

News carried to Dwáraká.

Wrath of Balaráma.

Remonstrances of Krishna.

return to this city, that he may be married to our sister according to the ordinance." And Balaráma said:—"Since you are so well satisfied with this matter, you may do as it pleases you." So Krishna sent messengers to bring back Arjuna, and Arjuna returned to Dwáraká; and Krishna held a great marriage feast, and gave his sister to Arjuna according to the established rites, and Arjuna abode at Dwáraká many months.

Marriage of Arjuna and Subhadrá.

After this, when the twelve years of exile were accomplished, Arjuna took leave of his new kinsmen, and departed with his wife Subhadrá for the city of Indra-prastha. And Raja Yudhishthira rejoiced to see him, and each of his brethren in turn gave him a feast which lasted many days. And Arjuna went to the apartment of Draupadí; but she was jealous, and looked coldly upon him, and said:—"What have you to do with me? Where is the daughter of Vasudeva?" But Arjuna replied with soothing words, and he caressed her, and after a while she became reconciled to him as before. Then Arjuna went out and brought Subhadrá to his mother Kuntí, and Subhadrá fell at the feet of her mother-in-law: and Kuntí lifted her up, and kissed her very affectionately, and gave her many blessings. Subhadrá then approached Draupadí, and bowed herself, and said:—"I am thy servant!" And Draupadí bowed in like manner, and embraced her, and said:—"May your husband be without enemies!" Then Subhadrá was filled with joy, and said:—"May it be so!" And henceforth there was amity between Draupadí and Subhadrá; and Draupadí gave birth to five sons, one to each of her husbands; but Subhadrá had one son only, whose name was Abhimanyu.

Arjuna returns to Indra-prastha with his wife Subhadrá.

Meeting between Arjuna and Draupadí.

Draupadí reconciled to Subhadrá.

The foregoing legend is undoubtedly a pleasing story, and real genius is displayed in describing the meeting of Arjuna and Draupadí, and that of Subhadrá and Draupadí, under such peculiar circumstances as those involved in the institution of polyandry. But the vast distance from Dwáraká to Indra-prastha excites the suspicion that the romance

Legend of Arjuna's marriage with Subhadrá proved to be a mere fiction.

is a pure fiction, belonging to the series of myths which have been interwoven with the main tradition for the sake of associating Krishna with the Pándavas. This suspicion is confirmed by a tradition, too deeply rooted for Brahmanical interpolations to explain away, which not only renders the alliance incredible, but fully indicates the reason for its introduction in the Mahá Bhárata. The identification of Krishna with Jagannáth, which will be discussed in another place, lays bare the truth. In the festivals of that god the three images of Krishna, his brother Balaráma, and his sister Subhadrá, are brought prominently forward; and the populace do not fail to heap reproaches upon Krishna, and upon his sister likewise, for having indulged in a criminal intimacy. It is, therefore, impossible to avoid the conclusion that the story of Arjuna's marriage is a myth, intended to cover the older tradition, which casts so foul a blot upon the memory of the favourite hero.[9]

Myth introduced to cover the tradition of Krishna's criminal intimacy with his sister.

The general history of the Kauravas and Pándavas during the alleged period of Arjuna's exile is altogether a blank; a significant silence which alone is sufficient to indicate that the interval of twelve years is purely mythical, and that there are few or no breaks between the foundation of Indra-prastha, the burning of the forest of Khándava, and the event which will form the subject of the next chapter.

Period of Arjuna's exile a blank in the general history of the Kauravas and Pándavas.

[9] In the older tradition, Subhadrá is said to have lived in criminal intimacy with both her brothers. This tradition is universally known and believed by the people in spite of the story of the marriage of Subhadrá; and the Mussulmans frequently taunt the Hindús with the fact. The Pundits reconcile the stories by a fiction of there having been two Subhadrás. As to Krishna's proceedings, they are explained away as máyá, or delusion. Máyá is a most important idea in the Hindú system of theology, and will be discussed in a future volume under the head of religion.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RAJASÚYA, OR ROYAL SACRIFICE, OF YUDHISHTHIRA.

Flourishing condition of the Raj of the Pándavas.

WHEN the Pándavas had established themselves in the city of Indra-prastha, their Raj flourished exceedingly; and the following poetical picture of a prosperous Raj, which has been taken from the Mahá Bhárata, may be accepted as an ideal description belonging to an age when the Bráhmans exercised a real supremacy, not only over the people but over the Rajas themselves:—

Brahmanical ideal of the paternal rule of Yudhishthira.

Tranquillity of the Raj enabled the subjects to perform all religious duties.

General prosperity insured by the virtues of the Raja.

Piety of the people preserved them from all calamity.

Yudhishthira respected by all the neighbouring Rajas.

Now Raja Yudhishthira ruled his Raj with great justice, protecting his subjects as he would his own sons, and subduing all his enemies round about, so that every man was without fear of war or disturbance, and gave his whole mind to the performance of every religious duty. And the Raja had plenty of rain at the proper season, and all his subjects became rich; and the virtues of the Raja were to be seen in the great increase of trade and merchandise, in the abundant harvests, and the prolific cattle. Every subject of the Raja was pious; there were no liars, no thieves, and no swindlers; and there were no droughts, no floods, no locusts, no conflagrations, no foreign invaders, and no parrots to eat the grain. The neighbouring Rajas, despairing of conquering Raja Yudhishthira, were very desirous of securing his friendship. Meanwhile Raja Yudhishthira, though he would never acquire wealth by unfair means, yet prospered so exceedingly, that had he lavished his riches for a thousand years no diminution would ever have been perceived.

Brahmanical tone of the foregoing myth.

The Brahmanical tone of this mythical description of a Raj is strikingly illustrative of the change between the period of Kshatriya conquest and that of Brahmanical ascendancy. The stress laid upon the importance of peace to enable the people to perform their duties is peculiarly Brahmanical. The Kshatriyas were a military class who delighted in war; and the blessings of peace as enabling the people to perform their religious duties is scarcely likely to have found a place in their own traditions. On the other hand, the performance of a ceaseless round of religious duties, and the special observance of particular days, form the constant burden of Brahmanical teaching; and the whole spirit of the myth, the eulogies which are freely bestowed upon the piety of the Raja and his subjects, and the temporal prosperity which rewarded such piety, is precisely what might have been expected from a priest caste labouring to enforce the duties of religion amongst an agricultural population.

Raja Yudhishthira resolves to celebrate a Rajasúya, or royal sacrifice.

When Raja Yudhishthira had thus triumphed over all his enemies, he resolved on performing the great royal sacrifice known as the Rajasúya, at which he should be inaugurated as an independent and sovereign Raja. This famous sacrifice appears to have existed as an institution amongst the ancient Kshatriyas at a remote period antecedent to the rise of the Bráhmans as a sacred and exclusive caste; and undoubtedly during the ascendancy of the Kshatriyas it had a political as well as a religious significance, being an assertion of sovereignty and supremacy as well as a sacrifice to the gods. In its original form it seems to have been a great national feast; the prototype of the banquets which were held in olden

Political significance of the Rajasúya, as an assertion of sovereignty at a national banquet, combined with a religious significance as a sacrifice to the gods.

Conception of sacrifice amongst the Kshatriyas.

time in Westminster Hall at the coronation of the ancient kings of England; and which were attended by the feudal Barons of the realm who had already paid their homage and sworn fealty to the new sovereign. Still, like most ancient institutions, the banquet was invested with a religious meaning, and was regarded both as a coronation feast and as a sacrifice to the gods. Indeed, it seems to have been a ceremonial at once devotional and festive; in which animals were sacrificed and roasted, and duly offered with hymns and invocations to the deities of the Vedas, as well as served up at the national banquet to the kinsmen, neighbours, and tributary Chieftains.[1]

[1] The mode by which the Brâhmans arrogated to themselves the sole right of officiating at the great sacrifices, and even of partaking of the meat, is curiously indicated by the following myths, which have been preserved in the Aitareya Brahmanam (Book VII. c. 4, Haug's translation). It should be premised that sacrifice is personified; so, too, is divine knowledge as the Brahma, and sovereignty as the Kshattra. The following texts are extracted verbatim :—

"After Prajâpati had created the sacrifice, the Brahma (divine knowledge) and the Kshattra (sovereignty) were produced. After both two kinds of creatures sprang up, such ones as eat the sacrificial food, and such ones as do not eat it. All eaters of the sacrificial food followed the Brahma, the non-eaters followed the Kshattra. Therefore, the Brâhmans only are eaters of the sacrificial food, whilst the Kshattriyas, Vais'yas, and Shûdras do not eat it.

"The sacrifice went away from both of them. The Brahma and Kshattra followed it. The Brahma followed with all its implements, and the Kshattra followed (also) with its implements. The implements of the Brahma are those required for performing a sacrifice. The implements of the Kshattra are a horse, carriage, an armour, and a bow with arrow. The Kshattra, not reaching the sacrifice, returned; for, frightened by the weapons of the Kshattra, the sacrifice ran aside. The Brahma then followed the sacrifice, and reached it. Hemming thus the sacrifice in its further course the Brahma stood still; the sacrifice, reached and hemmed in its course, stood still also, and recognizing in the hand of the Brahma its own implements, returned to the Brahma. The sacrifice having thus remained only in the Brahma, it is therefore only placed among the Brâhmans (i. e. they alone are allowed to perform it).

"The Kshattra then ran after this Brahma, and said to it, 'Allow me to take possession of this sacrifice (which is placed in thee).' The Brahma said, 'Well, let it be so; lay down thy own weapons, assume, by means of the implements of the Brahma (the sacrificial implements) which constitute the Brahma, the form of the Brahma, and return to it!' The Kshattra obeyed, laid down its own weapons, assumed, by means of the implements of the Brahma which constitute the Brahma, its form, and returned to it. Therefore, even a Kshattriya, when

During the subsequent period when the ascendancy of the Bráhmans began to assert itself side by side with the sovereignty of the Kshatriyas, the ceremonial of these sacrifices underwent a significant change. The simple offerings to the gods were no longer made by the patriarch of the family, or Chieftain of the tribe, but by an exclusive sacerdotal class, claiming a divine origin, and invested with supernatural powers. The result was that the political purport of the festival appears in a great measure to have passed away, whilst even the religious ideas, which found expression in the original institution, lost all their natural and joyous character. The child-like idea of propitiating the gods with choice viands became more or less modified by the more gloomy, but, at the same time, more complex conception, that

Decline of the political element during the Brahmanical ascendancy.

Change in the religious sentiment. Simple idea of propitiating the gods by delicious food, modified by the complex idea that the deity was to be propitiated by blood, and that animals were to be slain as an atonement for sin.

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he lays down his weapons and assumes the form of the Brahma by means of the sacrificial implements, returns to the sacrifice (he is allowed a share in it).'

"As regards the portion of sacrificial food which is to be eaten by the sacrificer, they ask, whether the Kshattriya should eat, or whether he should not eat it? They say, if he eat, then he commits a great sin, as having eaten sacrificial food although he is an *ahutâd* (one not permitted to eat). If he do not eat, then he cuts himself off from the sacrifice (with which he was connected). For the portion to be eaten by the sacrificer, is the sacrifice. This is to be made over to the Brahma priest. For the Brahma priest of the Kshattriya is in the place of (his) Purohita. The Purohita is the one-half of the Kshatriya; only through the intervention of another (the Brahma priest), the portion appears to be eaten by him, though he does not eat it with his own mouth. For the sacrifice is there where the Brahma (priest) is. The entire sacrifice is placed in the Brahma, and the sacrificer is in the sacrifice. They throw the sacrifice (in the shape of the portion which is to be eaten by the sacrificer) into the sacrifice (which has the form of the Brahma) just as they throw water into water, fire into fire, without making it overflow, nor causing any injury to the sacrificer. Therefore is this portion to be eaten by the sacrificer (if he be a Kshattriya) to be given up to the Brahma.

"Some sacrificial priests, however, sacrifice this portion to the fire, saying, 'I place thee in Prajâpat's world, which is called vibhan (shining everywhere), be joined to the sacrificer, Svâha!' But thus the sacrificial priest ought not to proceed. For the portion to be eaten by the sacrificer is the sacrificer himself. What priest, therefore, asserts this, burns the sacrificer in the fire. (If any one should observe a priest doing so) he ought to tell him, 'Thou hast singed the sacrificer in the fire. Agni will burn his breaths, and he will consequently die. Thus it always happens. Therefore, he should not think of doing so.'"

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blood must be shed to propitiate an offended deity, and to atone for any neglect in the fulfilment of superstitious duties, or for any breach of Brahmanical law. Accordingly, whilst the primitive ritual was still maintained, whilst the flesh meat, the simple cakes, the parched grain, the clarified butter, the milk, the curds, and the soma wine, were still offered to the genial gods of the Vedas, the animals were slaughtered at the stake in the hope of appeasing the wrath of some revengeful and exacting deity, or as a vicarious atonement for national transgression or individual sin.

Brahmanical doctrines of sacrifices, penances, and caste, overthrown by the reformation of Buddha, 600 B.C. to 800 A.D.

But against these superstitious conceptions of a divine ruler delighting in blood there arose that mighty movement known as Buddhism. In the same reforming spirit, and about the same age of the world's history, in which Isaiah denounced the rites and observances of the Mosaic law, the mysterious Buddha arose to anathematize the animal sacrifices of the Bráhmans.[2] For a period of twelve centuries, namely, from the sixth century before the Christian era until the eighth century after it, Buddhism triumphed throughout Hindústan; trampling upon the whole ceremonial of Brahmanism, with all its sacrifices, penances, and castes; and setting forth

[2] Isaiah's denunciations of the Mosaic ritual are very strong. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom! Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah! To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations! Incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them" (Isaiah i. 10—14). The story of Cain and Abel points to an opposite direction. The fruits of the earth were not accepted, but only the firstlings of the flock (Gen. iv. 2—4).

the paramount necessity for purity of mind and body, and a more elevated moral rule. Sacrifices of all kinds were especially excluded from the Buddhist ritual; and no corresponding rite was permitted beyond the offering of flowers to the Buddhas who had attained the perfection of being. At the expiration of that period, namely, about ten centuries ago, there arose that great Brahmanical reaction or revival, which has continued with but slight disturbance from either Islam or Christianity down to the present day. But the reforming spirit of Buddhism has never been wholly eradicated, and indeed has left a lasting impress upon the national ritual. The great sacrifices of antiquity have never been revived; and the sacrifice of goats has been restricted to the exceptional worship of Durgá, and chiefly confined to the province of Bengal. The Homa, or clarified butter, which is presented to the fire in sacrificial ladles, and the Páyasa or sacred food of rice and milk, which is cooked in the sacrificial kettles, form in the present day the main staple of the so-called offerings or sacrifices to the gods of India.

Brahmanical revival 800 A.D. et seq.

Influence of Buddhism throughout the modern age of Brahmanical revival.

Animal sacrifices replaced by the Homa and Páyasa.

From the foregoing observations it will have been seen that, since the first institution of the Rajasúya, the national conception of sacrifice has undergone four modifications, corresponding to the four great periods of Hindú history, namely, the Kshatriya, the Brahmanical, the Buddhistic, and the Brahmanical revival. The great sacrifices or banquets of the Kshatriyas were modified by the Bráhmans into sacrificial sessions of a purely religious character; but were subsequently swept away by the reformation of Buddha, which only permitted of the

Review of the subject. Four different conceptions of sacrifice, viz.:

(1.) The coronation banquets of the Kshatriyas.

(2.) The sacrificial sessions of the Bráhmans.

(3.) The flower offerings of the Buddhists.

(4.) The offering of Homa and Páyasa during the Brahmanical revival.

offering of flowers. So complete and effectual was this reformation, that animal sacrifices found no place in the Brahmanical revival; and the offerings to the gods henceforth mainly consisted of Homa and Páyasa, the clarified butter and the sacred food.[3] These data should be borne in mind whilst considering the description of the Rajasúya of Yudhishthira; inasmuch as the Mahá Bhárata appears to have assumed its present shape during the later period of Brahmanical revival; and consequently the description of the Rajasúya in the form in which it has been handed down by the Brahmanical compilers, bears traces of nearly all the ideas which prevailed throughout the widely different periods mapped out in the foregoing paragraphs. One exception, however, must be noticed, namely, that the fact of animal sacrifices in the Rajasúya of Yudhishthira has been apparently suppressed in the Mahá Bhárata, although it undoubtedly found a place in the early Brahmanic ritual.[4] The result has been that the sacrifice is not represented as an atonement for sin. Even this exception, however, finds full expression in the Aswamédha, or horse sacrifice performed by Yudhishthira at the conclusion of the great war; as well

Absence of allusions to animal sacrifice in the description of the Rajasúya of Yudhishthira, although it formed a part of the ancient rite.

[3] Whilst ghee or clarified butter formed the staple of the Homa, and rice and milk were the staple of the Páyasa, other materials of smaller importance were and are mingled with both, chiefly consisting of things produced from the cow. This part of the subject will be considered in connection with the worship of the cow.

[4] That an animal was tied to a stake and sacrificed as a burnt-offering at the Rajasúya, is plainly set forth in the Aitareya Bráhmanam, which apparently contains the oldest form of purely Brahmanical ritual extant. Dr Haug has published the original text of this valuable Bráhmana, with an English version attached; and it may be added that his work is of the highest authority, inasmuch as he practised all the ancient forms of sacrifice under the direction of one of the few Bráhmans who have preserved the sacrificial mysteries as they descended from the remotest times. See Dr Haug's preface to the Aitareya Bráhmanam.

as in the Aswamédha performed by Ráma after his war with Rávana; all of which will fully appear in their proper place hereafter.

Division of the legend of the Rajasúya into four sections.

The legend of the Rajasúya of Yudhishthira may be divided into four sections, namely:

1st, The preliminary Conquests.

2nd, The Sacrifice and Banquet.

3rd, The Death of Sisupála.

4th, The Jealousy of Duryodhana.

(1.) Preliminary conquests.

In taking into consideration the preliminary conquests of the Pándavas, it will be necessary to bear in mind what appear to be the bare facts. The Rajasúya was a triumphant ceremony. The Pándavas had gone out of Hastinápur with their mother, their joint wife, and their priest, and had settled in a new country. They had built the fort at Indra-prastha, cleared the jungle of Khándava, and driven out the Scythian tribe known as the Nágas. Finally, having founded a new Raj, and having sufficiently established a supremacy over every bordering enemy, and having thus proved to the satisfaction of their new subjects that they could protect cattle and harvests, they invited all their kinsmen and neighbours to a Rajasúya, and in the presence of all the people solemnly inaugurated their elder brother Yudhishthira as Raja of Khándava-prastha.

Limited area of conquest.

The very restricted area of conquest indicated in the foregoing incidents would be amply sufficient to warrant the performance of a Rajasúya. The ceremony certainly involved the idea of conquest over every enemy; but this idea would be sufficiently realized if a Raja had established himself in a Raj, and gained by his exploits the respect of all the Chieftains in the immediate neighbourhood.

Idea of the Rajasúya in its original application.

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In a later age, however, when the memory of the actual facts had nearly passed away, and the dim traditions were remodelled by later bards of boundless imaginations but limited geographical knowledge, the idea of conquest extended indefinitely over the whole earth, and necessarily led to the introduction of a considerable amount of mythical matter in order to realize the marvellous idea of universal empire. How this was effected may be gathered from the following myth:—

Idea of the Rajasúya extended to universal conquest.

Wars of the Pándavas.

Yudhishthira determines on performing a Rajasúya.

Pays all the debts of his subjects.

Calls a Council.

Sends for Krishna and takes his counsel.

Mythical conquest of Jarásandha, Raja of Magadhá.

Now when Arjuna had returned to his brethren at Indra-prastha, the Pándavas went out to war and conquered many Rajas, and Raja Yudhishthira determined to perform the great sacrifice which is called the Rajasúya. Having brought all his passions under the most perfect control, Raja Yudhishthira ordered every debt which any of his subjects owed to be paid out of the public treasury; but there were few debtors in that Raj, for all the people were ever engaged in virtuous and pious acts, and they rejoiced when they heard that the Raja was about to perform a Rajasúya. Then the Raja called together a Council of his brethren; and the Bráhmans, and his preceptor Dhaumya, and the sage Vyása were also present; and he told the Council what he intended to do, and they all consented and rejoiced exceedingly. But still Raja Yudhishthira was distrustful of himself, and he would not commence the sacrifice without taking the counsel of Krishna; and he sent messengers to Dwáraká to invite Krishna to come to Indra-prastha. And Krishna came to Indra-prastha, and said:—"There remains one Raja to be conquered before you can perform the Rajasúya sacrifice, and that is Jarásandha the Raja of Magadhá." And Krishna and Arjuna and Bhíma disguised themselves as Bráhmans, and journeyed to the city of Magadhá, and Bhíma challenged Jarásandha to single combat; and Jarásandha came out and fought against Bhíma, and after much fighting he was defeated and slain. Then the three returned to Indra-prastha, and Krishna advised Yudhishthira how the Raja-

súya should be performed. And Yudhishthira commanded his four brethren to go and collect tribute for the performance of the sacrifice from all the Rajas in the world, as was necessary in a Rajasúya; and he sent Arjuna to the north, Bhíma to the east, Sahadeva to the south, and Nakula to the west, and they went abroad for a whole year.[5]

Yudhishthira commands his four brethren to collect tribute from the four quarters of the world.

When the year was fully over the four brethren returned to Indra-prastha, and all the friends of Yudhishthira counselled him not to lose the opportunity of performing the Rajasúya. Krishna, who had returned to Dwáraká, came again to Indra-prastha with immense wealth and a large army; for as the walls protect the house so Krishna protected the Pándavas; and every man rejoiced to behold Krishna, as men rejoice to behold the rising sun. Then Raja Yudhishthira again spoke to Krishna about the Rajasúya; and Krishna said:—"You are now a great Raja, and it is proper for you to perform the Rajasúya, and I shall rejoice to assist you, and will do whatever you command." Yudhishthira replied:—"Your presence alone is a sufficient guarantee for the success of my Rajasúya."

Return of the four brethren.

Krishna again advices Yudhishthira to celebrate the Rajasúya.

The whole of the foregoing narrative is evidently a myth of the Brahmanical compilers who sought to promulgate the worship of Krishna. The mythical wanderings of the four brothers to the four quarters of the earth, where they waged supernatural wars, and whence they brought away supernatural quantities of gifts and tribute, are wholly unworthy of notice.[6] The mythical conquest of Jarásandha, Raja of Magadhá, calls, however, for some remark. In the traditional life of Krishna, that hero is represented as a cowherd of the Yádava tribe, who rebelled against the Raja of Mathura, and put him

Mythical character of the foregoing narrative.

Wars of the four brethren in the four quarters of the earth all mythical.

Conquest of Jarásandha, Raja of Magadhá, a myth appertaining to the life of Krishna.

[5] The Brahmanical compilers seem to have considered that Yudhishthira would be rather dull during the absence of his brothers. Accordingly, the mythical Vyása was introduced, who spent the entire year in imparting lessons of morality to Yudhishthira.

[6] The details may perhaps be found useful hereafter, as exhibiting the extent of geographical knowledge possessed by the Hindús in comparatively modern times.

to death. Subsequently, however, Krishna was defeated by Jarásandha and compelled to migrate with all his tribe from the city of Mathura to that of Dwáraká. Accordingly, in associating the tradition of Krishna with that of the Pándavas, the Brahmanical compilers ignore the vast geographical interval between Magadhá, the modern province of Bahar, and the city of Hastináp ur, and represent Krishna as directing the attention of Yudhishthira to Jarásandha, as a Raja who must be conquered before the Rajasúya could be performed. The story of the conquest of Jarásandha by Krishna, Arjuna, and Bhíma, is related at great length in the Mahá Bhárata, but the details are of a purely fabulous character.[7]

(2.) The sacrifice and feast.

The second section of the legend, comprising a description of the sacrifice and feast, is far more significant than the story of the preliminary conquests, although characterized by the same extravagant exaggerations. The legend, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, may be related as follows :—

[7] The barest outline of the myth will be sufficient to satisfy the most credulous reader. Bhíma, Krishna, and Arjuna go out single-handed to fight Jarásandha. On reaching the city of Magadhá, Krishna taunts Jarásandha with having shut up twenty thousand Rajas for the purpose of sacrificing them to the god Siva; a taunt which seems to indicate the opposition of the worshippers of Vishnu to the worshippers of Siva; Krishna being an incarnation of Vishnu. Bhíma then challenges Jarásandha to battle, and they fight together for fourteen days without stopping; and, moreover, without any interference, although all the people of Jarásandha, and all his army, were looking on. The battle terminates in a supernatural climax. It seems that Jarásandha, by the favour of a Rishi, had been born in two halves from the two wives of a Raja; and these two halves were supernaturally united after birth. On the fourteenth day of the battle Bhíma carried out the trick which he had practised against the Asuras, of whirling Jarásandha round by the heels, and dashing out his brains against the ground, and then rending him into his original halves! Such is a very curtailed specimen of the lengthened myths which are to be found in the Mahá Bhárata, and which are almost as useless for the purposes of history as the dreams of a madman.

Assembling of the Rajas to the Rajasúya.

Now when all things had been made ready for the Rajasúya, all the Rajas came to the place of sacrifice, bringing much wealth with them; and those who were friends to Raja Yudhishthira brought great presents, and those who had been conquered brought much tribute. And all the kinsmen of the Pándavas came in like manner to the Rajasúya. Duryodhana and all the Kauravas were there, together with the Maháraja, and Bhíshma, and Drona, and Drupada, the father of Draupadí, and Sisupála, the Raja of Chedí, and Krishna, and his brother Balaráma, and his father Vasudeva. And all the Rajas of the Middle Country, and all the Rajas of the South Country, came in like manner to the Rajasúya; and altogether there were so many Rajas that their names cannot be recounted.

Rajas of the Middle and South Countries.

Magnificent pavilions appointed for the reception of the Rajas.

And every Raja had a lodging or pavilion of his own, in which provisions of every variety were served up in great abundance. And these pavilions were all very lofty, and of a pure white colour inlaid with gold; and round about each pavilion were very many beautiful trees, and round about the trees was a lofty wall covered with garlands of flowers. And the windows in those pavilions were made of golden network, and the doors to the rooms were made of solid gold, and the walls of the rooms were made of gold and silver. And all the rooms were laid with rich carpets, and decorated with furniture fitted for a Raja, and perfumed with sandal wood and incense. And the stairs leading to the upper rooms were so made, that no man found it difficult to go up or down. And the moment a man entered one of these rooms he was sure to be refreshed were he ever so weary. And the Rajas beheld the sacrifice while they were seated in those rooms.

Assembling of all the four castes.

And Raja Yudhishthira commanded that all the Bráhmans and Kshatriyas, and all the respectable Vaisyas and Súdras, should be invited to attend the Rajasúya. And all the Rajas came and took up their abode in the pavilions; and all the Bráhmans who were to assist at the sacrifice came in like manner, and were entertained as splendidly as the Rajas. And all the four castes came as they had been invited. And the whole city of Indra-prastha resounded

with the chaunting of Vedic hymns, and "Take and eat" were the only words that could be heard.

Place of sacrifice.

Meanwhile the place of sacrifice was made ready, and it was surrounded on all sides by the pavilions of the Rajas and the Bráhmans, and by very many storehouses and treasuries; and it surpassed in richness and beauty every place of sacrifice which had ever been seen before. And

Vyása, the chief of the sacrifice.

the sage Vyása was chief of the sacrifice, and appointed everything that was to be done; and he brought some very

Sasarman, the leader of the choir of Bráhmans.

learned sages to attend the great ceremony. And Sasarman was appointed to be Udgátri, or chief chaunter of the Vedic hymns. And Dhaumya and Yajna-walkya were the Hotris,

Dhaumya and Yajna-walkya, the sacred cooks.

who cooked the sacrifice, and offered it to the gods; and

Choir of young Bráhmans.

their sons and pupils were the Brithis, or assistant Hotris, who chaunted the mantras whilst the sacrifice was being presented to the fire. Then Raja Yudhishthira, bowing down to his uncle Dhritaráshtra, asked the permission of Bhíshma, Drona, Duryodhana, and the rest, that he might begin the ceremony, saying:—"You have full control over my property and Raj, so do what is best for me: All of you must assist me in this undertaking, and each one must

The great feast.

accept a separate charge." Then Bhíshma and Drona directed the feast, and gave their counsel as to what was to be done, and what was to be omitted. Duryodhana was made the general superintendent in giving and receiving

Distribution of food and gifts.

presents. Duhsásana superintended the distribution of the food; and Sahadeva took charge of all the choicer provisions; and two of the most faithful servants of Arjuna distributed the rice, the butter, the sugar, the milk, and the sandal wood. Aswatthámá, the son of Drona, and Sanjaya, the minister and charioteer of Dritaráshtra, waited upon

Mythical respect shown to the Bráhmans.

the Bráhmans; Kripa gave the gifts to the Bráhmans; and Krishna was appointed to wash the feet of the Bráhmans; and the gifts that were given to the Bráhmans were beyond all computation.

Exaggerations in the description of the sacrifice and feast.

The extravagant exaggerations which appear in the foregoing narrative are somewhat distracting, but yet it may be possible to draw an approximate

picture of the events which actually transpired. The scene which probably presented itself to the eye at the Rajasúya, was a barbarous sacrifice followed by a rude feast in the open air. The ceremonies performed at the sacrifice are not clearly related in the Mahá Bhárata, but were probably in accordance with those which find expression in the Rig-Veda. A number of priests, either Bráhmans, or the predecessors of Bráhmans, marked out the spot for sacrifice, and strewed the place with the sacred kusa grass, and kindled the sacrificial fire, singing the old incantations which had been handed down to them by their fathers from times primeval. They next presented the Homa in sacrificial ladles, and poured it upon the flame with much chaunting of Vedic hymns, and performance of mystic rites; and doubtless they invoked Agni, the deity of fire, to lick up their simple oblations, and carry them in the ascending flame to the bright gods on high. Then animals may have been sacrificed, and their flesh cooked upon the fire, whilst vast quantities of other food were prepared, partly as offerings to the gods, and partly as provisions for the assembly. But before the worshippers sat down to the feast, the deities of the Vedas, with Indra at their head, would be invoked in passionate strains to descend from their resplendent abodes, and to come and sit down upon the sacred grass, and partake of the choice viands which had been prepared for their acceptance; and especially to drink up the milk, the curds, the ghee, the sugar, and the grateful and exhilarating juice of the soma.

Probable picture of the real scene.

Probable character of the sacrificial rites.

The place of sacrifice strewed with Kusa grass.

The sacrificial fire.

Presentation of the Homa.

Invocations to Agni.

Nature of the sacrifices.

Invocations to Indra and all the gods to descend and partake of the offerings.

The so-called Rajas who really attended the Rajasúya were in all probability a rude company of

Probable character of the Rajas who were present at the Rajasúya.

half-naked warriors, who feasted boisterously beneath the shade of trees. Their conversation was very likely confined to their domestic relations, such as the state of their health, the condition of their families, the exploits of their sons, and the marriages of their daughters; or to their domestic circumstances, such as herds of cattle, harvests of grain, and feats of arms against robbers and wild beasts. Their highest ideas were probably simple conceptions of the gods who sent light, heat, and rain; who gave long life, abundance of children, prolific cattle, and brimming harvests, and who occasionally manifested their wrath in lightning and thunder, in devastating tempests and destroying floods. Such, in all probability, was the general character of the festive multitude who sat down upon the grass at the great feast to eat and drink vigorously to the honour and glory of the new Raja.

Topics of conversation.

But the simple details of such a primitive gathering, grateful as they would have proved to a student of human nature, could scarcely have satisfied the aspirations of the later Brahmanical bards, or the pre-conceived ideas of the audiences before whom they recited the ancient story. The age when the Mahá Bhárata assumed its present form was a period of Brahmanical ascendancy. The divinity of the Bráhman caste was powerfully enforced and implicitly believed; and those ancient sages who had rendered themselves famous by their wisdom and fabled austerities, were reverenced as gods. At the same time the Courts of the Hindú Rajas who acknowledged the spiritual supremacy of the Brahmanical hierarchy, were a blaze of Oriental splendour and luxury. The Rajas themselves never appeared before their subjects, unless arrayed in royal vest-

Reasons why the authentic tradition is lost in mythical exaggerations.

The Mahá Bhárata composed in an age of Brahmanical ascendancy.

Contemporary splendour of the courts of the Rajas.

ments of cloth of gold and colours, adorned with a profusion of jewels, and surrounded on all sides by the glittering insignia of Hindú royalty. In other words, an age of ecclesiastical power and regal magnificence had succeeded to the simple patriarchal rule which prevailed in the Vedic period. Under such circumstances as these, the bards and eulogists, who chaunted the ancient story before the later Rajas, could scarcely have related the primitive details of olden time in which Princesses milked the cows, and Princes tilled the land. On the other hand, every exaggeration and embellishment which was introduced would add to the attraction of the legend, for they would redound to the greatness and grandeur of the Hindú heroes of olden time, the fathers of the very men who were drinking in the story. The temptations which led the Brahmanical compilers to exalt their ancient sages in the eyes of a later generation were even stronger; for the fabled respect paid to the sages by the ancient Rajas furnished bright examples for later Rajas to follow; and certainly the assertion that Krishna washed the feet of the Bráhmans is the highest glorification which could be conceived by the Hindús.

The early tradition remodelled to suit the tastes and ideas of a later period.

The Brahmanical compilers tempted by self-interest to exaggerate the respect paid to the ancient sages.

Significance of the assertion that Krishna washed the feet of the Bráhmans.

The death of Sisupála, which forms a third section of the legend of the Rajasúya, belongs to one of that series of traditions respecting Krishna which are so frequently found interlaced with the history of the Pándavas. The tradition is apparently authentic in itself, and only demands consideration because it seems to have been grafted on another authentic tradition with which it has no real connection. The story is as follows:—

(3.) The death of Sisupála an authentic tradition belonging to the Krishna group, but grafted on to the history of the Pándavas.

Legend of the presentation of the Argha to the greatest Chieftain present at a Rajasúya.

Now the custom was at the beginning of a Rajasúya to

declare who was the greatest and strongest of all the Rajas there assembled, in order that the Argha might be given to him; and Bhíshma, as ruler of the feast, declared that the honour was due to Krishna, who was the greatest and strongest of them all. But Sisupála, the Raja of Chedi, was exceedingly wroth with Krishna, for when he was betrothed to the beautiful Rukmini, Krishna had carried her away and made her his own wife. So Sisupála arose and threw the whole assembly into an uproar, and he said with a loud voice:—"If the honour be due to age, it should have been given to Vasudeva; if it be due to him who has the greatest Raj, it should have been given to Raja Drupada; if it be due to the youth of loftiest mind, it should have been given to Raja Duryodhana; if it be due to the greatest preceptor, it should have been given to Drona; and if it be due to the greatest saint, it should have been given to Vyása: But shame be upon this assembly, who hath given that honour to a cowherd, who was the murderer of his own Raja." Having thus spoken, Sisupála and his friends who were with him made a great tumult. Yudhishthira and Bhíshma then reasoned with Sisupála, but he would not heed their words, and drew his sword, and threatened to slay all the guests and spoil the sacrifice. Yudhishthira and his brethren then rose to fight against Sisupála, but Bhíshma withheld them; and Sisupála in his rage abused Bhíshma and Krishna in such opprobrious terms that the whole assembly were alarmed. At last Krishna said:—"I have hitherto restrained my hand, because this man is my own kinsman, but I can bear with his words no longer." And thus speaking he whirled his chakra furiously at Sisupála, and severed his head from his body; and Sisupála fell dead upon the ground, and his sons carried away his body and burnt it upon the funeral píle. Thus Krishna saved the Rajasúya of Yudhishthira by the slaughter of Sisupála; for had Raja Yudhishthira been set at defiance by a Raja who had not been conquered, the Rajasúya would have been imperfect and of no avail.

The Argha given to Krishna.

Wrath of Sisupála.

General uproar.

Threat of Sisupála that he would spoil the sacrifice.

Sisupála beheaded by the chakra of Krishna.

Rajasúya of Yudhishthira saved by Krishna.

Point of the foregoing legend; the presentation of the Argha to Krishna.

The foregoing story turns upon the presentation

of the Argha to the greatest Chieftain present at the Rajasúya; the Argha being a respectful gift, such as fruit and flowers, or milk and honey, which the Hindús are still accustomed to offer to an idol, or to a Bráhman, or to a bridegroom on his wedding day.

Nature of the Argha.

The legend is at variance with the mythic account of the pavilions from which the Rajas are said to have beheld the sacrifice; but this contradiction cannot be said to prove anything, as it is derived from a mythical source.

Discrepancy between the legend of the Argha and the mythic account of the pavilions.

A stronger suspicion arises from the fact that the story is perfectly in accordance with the traditionary accounts of the assemblies of the Yádavas, but has no parallel in the traditionary accounts of the councils of the Kshatriyas of the royal house of Bhárata, which indeed are generally characterized by an observance of order and law.

Conformity of the story to the traditions referring to Krishna, but not to the traditions referring to the descendants of Bhárata.

Then again no trace of such custom, as that of presenting the Argha to the most distinguished Chieftain at such an assembly, appears in the ancient ritual of the Rajasúya, as preserved in the Aitareya Brahmanam.

Presentation of the Argha not to be found in the ancient ritual of the Rajasúya.

On the contrary, the Rajasúya was a ceremony expressive of the superiority of the Raja who performed the sacrifice; whilst the custom of offering the Argha as a token of respect or act of worship belonged to the Buddhist period, and was essentially a form of worship antagonistic to that of sacrifice.

The Argha attributed to the Buddhist period.

That Sisupála was killed at some festival of the Yádavas is by no means unlikely, and more than one such tragedy will be noticed hereafter in the traditionary history of Krishna; and the only question that remains is the reason why the Brahmanical compilers grafted such a barbarous incident upon the traditions of the Kshatriyas.

Reason why the Yádava tradition of the death of Sisupála is grafted on to the Kshatriya tradition.

The legend, a religious myth, representing the opposition of Vishnu to Siva, and enforcing the worship of Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu.

The whole legend, however, as it appears in the

Mahá Bhárata, is leavened with references to the divine nature of Krishna, as an incarnation of Vishnu; whilst Sisupála is said to have been born with three eyes, a fable which at once converts him into a representative or incarnation of Siva. For a long period the opposition of the worship of Vishnu to the worship of Siva desolated India with persecutions and civil wars; and the ancient legend has been converted into a myth to indicate both the opposition of the two deities, and the superior might of Vishnu. The Argha was a token of worship. By denouncing the presentation of the Argha to Krishna, Sisupála virtually denounced the worship of Vishnu; and his extraordinary death is thus treated as a manifestation of the divine wrath of Krishna, as an incarnation of Vishnu, of whom the chakra is a distinguished symbol.[8]

The chakra of Krishna an emblem of the wrath of Vishnu.

(4.) Jealous wrath of Duryodhana.

The jealous wrath of Duryodhana forms the conclusion of the story of the Rajasúya; but whilst the envy of the Kaurava Chieftain at beholding the success of his rival kinsmen is perfectly intelligible, his anger is said to have been excited by circumstances which can only be regarded as fictions of a later age. This conclusion will at once be obvious from the story, which is as follows:—

Duryodhana's surprise at the marvels at Indra-prastha.

When the sacrifice had been fully accomplished, Duryodhana entered the place where it had been performed, and saw very many beautiful things that he had never beheld in his own Raj at Hastinápur. Amongst other wonders was a

Mistakes a square of crystal for real water.

[8] The chakra, or sharp-edged quoit, was the peculiar weapon of Vishnu, and is invariably placed in one of his four hands. At a subsequent period the chakra was converted into the prayer-wheel of the Buddhists. The subject however belongs more directly to the history of the religion of the Hindús, under which head it will be considered in a future volume.

square made of black crystal, which appeared to the eye of Duryodhana to be clear water; and as he stood on the margin he began to draw up his garments lest they should be wetted, and then throwing them off he plunged in to bathe, and was struck violently on the head against the crystal. Then he was very much ashamed and left that place immediately; and coming to a lake of clear water, he thought it was black crystal and boldly walked into it, and would have been drowned had he not been dragged out by the servants of Raja Yudhishthira. Then the servants brought him new clothes, and he walked very warily; and the four brethren of Yudhishthira saw him, and began to laugh at his walking. Duryodhana was then very wroth, but he would not look at them, and he said nothing to them, and he sought to come away from that place; and it so happened that he tried to go out at a false door, and struck his head very violently in trying to pass quickly through it. After this he found his way out of the palace and returned to the city of Hastinápur, and told his father, the Maháraja, all that had occurred.

Mistakes a lake of clear water for one of crystal.

Excites the mirth of the Pándavas.

Strikes his head against a false door.

It is somewhat singular that the foregoing story is not only a fiction of a later age, but seems to have been borrowed from the Mussulmans. A legend is preserved in the Koran that when the Queen of Sheba paid a visit to Solomon, she was conducted by the Hebrew King into a room floored with glass, upon which she thought that the glass was water and lifted up her robe.[9] That the early colonists at Indra-prastha should have arrived at such a high pitch of art as the story would seem to imply ap-

The foregoing fiction borrowed from the Koran of the Mussulmans.

[9] Koran, chap. xxvii. *Sale's translation.* According to Arab commentators the legs of the Queen of Sheba were covered with hair like those of an ass; and Solomon was anxious to prove the fact by ocular demonstration. Subsequently the Queen is said to have renounced idolatry, and to have professed Islam; and Solomon thought of marrying her, but would not do so until the hair had been removed. See Sale's *notes on the passage.*

pears wholly incredible; but that the unscrupulous compilers should have borrowed the idea from the early Mussulmans is by no means unlikely; although it is possible that the fable might naturally arise in the mind of any imaginative people on first beholding a commodity like glass, which bears so strong a resemblance to solid water.

Possibility of the legend originating from an independent source.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GAMBLING MATCH AT HASTINÁPUR.

THE celebration of the Rajasúya had raised the fortunes of the Pándavas to the height of human prosperity; and at this point the universal conception of an avenging Nemesis, that humbles the proud and casts down the mighty, finds full expression in the Hindú Epic. The grandeur of the Rajasúya, and the sovereignty which it involved, excited the jealousy of Duryodhana, and revived the old feud between the Kauravas and Pándavas. Duryodhana plotted with his brother Duhsásana and his uncle Sákuni, how they might dispossess the Pándavas of their newly acquired territory; and at length they determined to invite their kinsmen to a gambling match, and seek by underhand means to deprive Yudhishthira of his Raj.

The avenging Nemesis.

Duryodhana, jealous of the Rajasúya, plots to dispossess the Pándavas of their new Raj.

Proposal to invite the Pándavas to a gambling match.

The specialities of Hindú gambling are worthy of some attention. The passion for play, which has ever been the vice of warriors in times of peace, becomes a madness amidst the lassitude of a tropical clime; and more than one Hindú legend has been preserved of Rajas playing together for days, until the wretched loser has been deprived of everything he possessed and reduced to the condition of an exile or a slave. But gambling amongst the Hindús does

Gambling the special vice of the Kshatriyas.

Hindú traditions of its disastrous results.

Specialities of Hindú dice: skill as well as chance brought into play.

not appear to have been altogether dependent upon chance. The ancient Hindú dice, known by the name of coupun, are almost precisely similar to the modern dice, being cubic balls thrown out of a box; but the practice of loading is plainly alluded to, and some skill seems to have been occasionally exercised in the rattling of the dice box. In the more modern game, known by the name of pasha, the dice are not cubic, but oblong; and they are thrown from the hand, either direct upon the ground, or against a post or board, which will break the fall, and render the result more a matter of chance. It would, however, appear from the Mahá Bhárata that Yudhishthira was invited to a game at coupun.

Ancient game of coupun with cubic dice.

Modern game of pasha with oblong dice.

The legend of the great gambling match at Hastinápur may now be related as follows:—

Legendary account of the gambling match at Hastinápur.

And it came to pass that Duryodhana was very jealous of the Rajasúya that his cousin Yudhishthira had performed; and he desired in his heart to destroy the Pándavas and gain possession of their Raj. Now Sakuni was the brother of Gándhári, who was the mother of the Kauravas; and he was very skilful in throwing dice, and in playing with dice that were loaded; insomuch that whenever he played he always won the game. So Duryodhana plotted with his uncle, that Yudhishthira should be invited to a match at gambling, and that Sakuni should challenge him to a game, and win all his wealth and lands.

Unscrupulous skill of Sakuni, the maternal uncle of Duryodhana.

Duryodhana prevails on the Maháraja to invite the Pándavas to a gambling match.

After this the wicked Duryodhana proposed to his father, the Maháraja, that they should have a great gambling match at Hastinápur, and that Yudhishthira and his brethren should be invited to the festival. And the Maháraja was glad in his heart that his sons should be friendly with the sons of his deceased brother Pándu; and he sent his younger brother, Vidura, to the city of Indra-prastha to invite the Pándavas to the game. And Vidura went his way to the city of the Pándavas, and was received by them with every

Vidura carries the invitation to Indra-prastha.

sign of attention and respect. And Yudhishthira inquired whether his kinsfolk and friends at Hastinápur were all well in health, and Vidura replied, "They are all well." Then Vidura said to the Pándavas:—"Your uncle, the Maháraja, is about to give a great feast, and he has sent me to invite you and your mother, and your joint wife, to come to his city, and there will be a great match at dice-playing." When Yudhishthira heard these words, he was troubled in mind, for he knew that gaming was a frequent cause of strife, and that he was in no way skilful in throwing the dice; and he likewise knew that Sakuni was dwelling at Hastinápur, and that he was a famous gambler. But Yudhishthira remembered that the invitation of the Maháraja was equal to the command of a father, and that no true Kshatriya could refuse a challenge either to war or play. So Yudhishthira accepted the invitation, and gave commandment that on the appointed day, his brethren, and their mother, and their joint wife should accompany him to the city of Hastinápur.

Reluctance of Yudhishthira.

His obligation to obey the Maháraja and accept a challenge.

When the day arrived for the departure of the Pándavas, they took their mother Kuntí, and their joint wife Draupadí, and journeyed from Indra-prastha to the city of Hastinápur. And when they entered the city they first paid a visit of respect to the Maháraja; and they found him sitting amongst his Chieftains; and the ancient Bhíshma, and the preceptor Drona, and Karna, who was the friend of Duryodhana, and many others were sitting there also. And when the Pándavas had done reverence to the Maháraja, and respectfully saluted all present, they paid a visit to their aunt Gándhárí, and did her reverence likewise. And after they had done this, their mother and joint wife entered the presence of Gándhárí, and respectfully saluted her; and the wives of the Kauravas came in and were made known to Kuntí and Draupadí. And the wives of the Kauravas were much surprised when they beheld the beauty and fine raiment of Draupadí; and they were very jealous of their kinswoman. And when all their visits had been paid, the Pándavas retired with their wife and mother to the quarters which had been prepared for them, and when it was evening they

The Pándavas proceed to Hastinápur with Kunti and Draupadi.

Pay visits of ceremony to Maháraja Dhritaráshtra and the Rání Gándhári.

Jealousy of the wives of the Kauravas at the beauty and elegance of Draupadí.

The Pándavas return to their quarters and receive the visits of their friends.

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received the visits of all their friends who were dwelling at Hastinápur.

Morning of the gambling match.

Now on the morrow the gambling match was to be played; so when the morning had come, the Pándavas bathed and dressed, and left Draupadí in the lodging which had been prepared for her, and went their way to the palace.

The Pándavas conducted to the pavilion.

And the Pándavas again paid their respects to their uncle the Maháraja, and were then conducted to the pavilion where the play was to be; and Duryodhana went with them, together with all his brethren, and all the Chieftains of the royal house.

Sakuni challenges Yudhishthira to a game at dice.

And when the assembly had all taken their seats, Sakuni said to Yudhishthira:—"The ground here has all been prepared, and the dice are all ready: Come now, I pray you, and play a game."

Yudhishthira requires that Sakuni should play fair.

But Yudhishthira was disinclined, and replied:—"I will not play excepting upon fair terms; but if you will pledge yourself to throw without artifice or deceit, I will accept your challenge."

Taunt of Sakuni.

Sakuni said:—"If you are so fearful of losing, you had better not play at all."

Yudhishthira in his wrath accepts the challenge.

At these words Yudhishthira was wroth, and replied:—"I have no fear either in play or war; but let me know with whom I am to play, and who is to pay me if I win."

Duryodhana proposes to lay the stakes whilst Sakuni plays.

So Duryodhana came forward and said:—"I am the man with whom you are to play, and I shall lay any stakes against your stakes; but my uncle Sakuni will throw the dice for me."

Yudhishthira protests, but plays.

Then Yudhishthira said:—"What manner of game is this, where one man throws and another lays the stakes?" Nevertheless he accepted the challenge, and he and Sakuni began to play.

Picture of the gambling scene in the pavilion.

At this point in the narrative it may be desirable to pause, and endeavour to obtain a picture of the scene. The so-called pavilion was probably a temporary booth constructed of bamboos and interlaced with basket-work; and very likely it was decorated with flowers and leaves after the Hindú fashion, and hung with fruits, such as cocoa-nuts, mangoes, plantains, and maize. The Chieftains present seem to have sat upon the ground, and watched the game.

The stakes may have been pieces of gold or silver, or cattle, or lands; although, according to the legendary account which follows, they included articles of a far more extravagant and imaginative character. With these passing remarks, the tradition of this memorable game may be resumed as follows:—

The succession of games.

So Yudhishthira and Sakuni sat down to play, and whatever Yudhishthira laid as stakes, Duryodhana laid something of equal value; but Yudhishthira lost every game. He first lost a very beautiful pearl; next a thousand bags, each containing a thousand pieces of gold; next a piece of gold so pure that it was as soft as wax; next a chariot set with jewels, and hung all round with golden bells; next a thousand war elephants with golden howdahs set with diamonds; next a lakh of slaves all dressed in good garments; next a lakh of beautiful slave girls, adorned from head to foot with golden ornaments; next all the remainder of his goods; next all his cattle; and then the whole of his Raj, excepting only the lands which had been granted to the Bráhmans.[1]

Mythical losses of Yudhishthira.

Loses the whole of his Raj, excepting the jagheers of the Bráhmans.

Now when Yudhishthira had lost his Raj, the Chieftains present in the pavilion were of opinion that he should cease to play, but he would not listen to their words, but persisted in the game. And he staked all the jewels belonging to his brothers, and he lost them; and he staked his two younger brothers, one after the other, and he lost them; and he then staked Arjuna, and Bhíma, and finally himself, and he lost every game. Then Sakuni said to him:—

Stakes his brothers as slaves, and loses them.

Stakes himself, and loses.

"You have done a bad act, Yudhishthira, in gaming away

[1] A lakh is a hundred thousand, and a crore is a hundred lakhs, or ten millions. The Hindú term might therefore have been converted into English numerals, only that it does not seem certain that the bards meant precisely a hundred thousand slaves, but only a very large number.

The exceptional clause in favour of the Bráhmans is very significant. When the little settlement at Indra-prastha had been swelled by the imagination of the later bards into an extensive Raj, the thought may have entered the minds of the Brahmanical compilers that in losing the Raj, the Bráhmans might have lost those free lands, known as inams or jagheers, which are frequently granted by pious Rajas for the subsistence of Bráhmans. Hence the insertion of the clause.

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yourself, and becoming a slave: But now stake your wife Draupadí, and if you win the game you will again be free." And Yudhishthira answered and said:—"I will stake Draupadí!" And all assembled were greatly troubled and thought evil of Yudhishthira; and his uncle Vidura put his hand to his head and fainted away, whilst Bhíshma and Drona turned deadly pale, and many of the company were very sorrowful; but Duryodhana and his brother Duhsásana, and some others of the Kauravas, were glad in their hearts, and plainly manifested their joy. Then Sakuni threw the dice, and won Draupadí for Duryodhana.

Stakes Draupadí. Agitation of the elder Chieftains, and joy of the Kauravas.

Yudhishthira loses.

General consternation.

Then all in that assembly were in great consternation, and the Chieftains gazed upon one another without speaking a word. And Duryodhana said to his uncle Vidura:—"Go now and bring Draupadí hither, and bid her sweep the rooms." But Vidura cried out against him with a loud voice, and said:—"What wickedness is this? Will you order a woman who is of noble birth, and the wife of your own kinsman, to become a household slave? How can you vex your brethren thus? But Draupadí has not become your slave; for Yudhishthira lost himself before he staked his wife, and having first become a slave, he could no longer have power to stake Draupadí." Vidura then turned to the assembly and said:—"Take no heed to the words of Duryodhana, for he has lost his senses this day." Duryodhana then said:—"A curse be upon this Vidura, who will do nothing that I desire him."

Duryodhana sends for Draupadí to sweep the rooms.

Vidura protests, and urges that Draupadí was not lost, as Yudhishthira was a slave when he staked her.

After this Duryodhana called one of his servants, and desired him to go to the lodgings of the Pándavas, and bring Draupadí into the pavilion. And the man departed out, and went to the lodgings of the Pándavas, and entered the presence of Draupadí, and said to her:—"Raja Yudhishthira has played you away, and you have become the slave of Raja Duryodhana: So come now and do your duty like his other slave girls." And Draupadí was astonished at these words, and exceedingly wroth, and she replied:—"Whose slave was I that I could be gambled away? And who is such a senseless fool as to gamble away his own wife?"

Duryodhana sends his servant to bring Draupadí to the pavilion.

The servant said:—"Raja Yudhishthira has lost himself, and his four brothers, and you also, to Raja Duryodhana, and you cannot make any objection: Arise, therefore, and go to the house of the Raja!" Then Draupadí cried out:—"Go you now and inquire whether Raja Yudhishthira lost me first or himself first; for if he played away himself first, he could not stake me." So the man returned to the assembly, and put the question to Yudhishthira; but Yudhishthira hung down his head with shame, and answered not a word.

Draupadí refuses to go.

Then Duryodhana was filled with wrath, and he cried out to his servant:—"What waste of words is this? Go you and bring Draupadí hither, that if she has aught to say, she may say it in the presence of us all." And the man essayed to go, but he beheld the wrathful countenance of Bhíma, and he was sore afraid, and he refused to go, and remained where he was. Then Duryodhana sent his brother Duhsásana; and Duhsásana went his way to the lodgings of Draupadí and said:—"Raja Yudhishthira has lost you in play to Raja Duryodhana, and he has sent for you: So arise now, and wait upon him according to his commands; and if you have anything to say, you can say it in the presence of the assembly." Draupadí replied:—"The death of the Kauravas is not far distant, since they can do such deeds as these." And she rose up in great trepidation and set out, but when she came near to the palace of the Maháraja, she turned aside from the pavilion where the Chieftains were assembled, and ran away with all speed towards the apartments of the women. And Duhsásana hastened after her, and seized her by her hair, which was very dark and long, and dragged her by main force into the pavilion before all the Chieftains. And she cried out:—"Take your hands from off me!" But Duhsásana heeded not her words, and said:—"You are now a slave girl, and slave girls cannot complain of being touched by the hands of men."

Duryodhana sends his servant a second time.

The servant refuses to go.

Duhsásana goes to bring Draupadi.

Duhsásana drags Draupadi into the pavilion by her hair.

When the Chieftains thus beheld Draupadí, they hung down their heads from shame; and Draupadí called upon the elders amongst them, such as Bhíshma and Drona, to

The elder Chieftains paralyzed.

Draupadi vainly appeals to Bhishma and Drona.

acquaint her whether or no Raja Yudhishthira had gamed away himself before he had staked her; but they likewise held down their heads and answered not a word. Then she cast her eye upon the Pándavas, and her glance was like the stabbing of a thousand daggers, but they moved not hand or foot to help her; for when Bhíma would have stepped forward to deliver her from the hands of Duhsásana, Yudhishthira commanded him to forbear, and both he and the younger Pándavas were obliged to obey the commands of their elder brother. And when Duhsásana saw that Draupadí looked towards the Pándavas, he took her by the hand, and drew her another way, saying:—"Why, O slave, are you turning your eyes about you?" And when Karna and Sakuni heard Duhsásana calling her a slave, they cried out:—"Well said! well said!"

The Pándavas forbidden by Yudhishthira to interfere.

Duhsásana insults Draupadí before all the assembly.

Then Draupadí wept very bitterly, and appealed to all the assembly, saying:—"All of you have wives and children of your own, and will you permit me to be treated thus? I ask you one question, and I pray you to answer it." Duhsásana then broke in and spoke foul language to her, and used her rudely, so that her veil came off in his hands. And Bhíma could restrain his wrath no longer, and spoke vehemently to Yudhishthira; and Arjuna reproved him for his anger against his elder brother, but Bhíma answered:—"I will thrust my hands into the fire before these wretches shall treat my wife in this manner before my eyes." Then Duryodhana said to Draupadí:—"Come now, I pray you, and sit upon my thigh!" And Bhíma gnashed his teeth, and cried out with a loud voice:—"Hear my vow this day! If for this deed I do not break the thigh of Duryodhana, and drink the blood of Duhsásana, I am not the son of Kuntí!"

Draupadí's solemn appeal to the Chieftains.

Gross outrages committed by Duhsásana and Duryodhana.

Bhíma's fearful vow.

Meanwhile the Chieftain Vidura had left the assembly, and told the blind Maháraja Dhritaráshtra all that had taken place that day; and the Maháraja ordered his servants to lead him into the pavilion where all the Chieftains were gathered together. And all present were silent when they saw the Maháraja, and the Maháraja said to Draupadí:—"O daughter,

Sudden appearance of the Maháraja in the pavilion.

The Maháraja apologizes to Draupadí, and bids her return with her husbands to Indraprastha.

my sons have done evil to you this day: But go now, you and your husbands, to your own Raj, and remember not what has occurred, and let the memory of this day be blotted out for ever." So the Pándavas made haste with their wife Draupadí, and departed out of the city of Hastinápur.

Duryodhana wrathfully remonstrates with the Maháraja.

Then Duryodhana was exceedingly wroth, and he said to his father:—"O Maháraja, is it not a saying that when your enemy hath fallen down, he should be annihilated without a war? And now that we had thrown the Pándavas to the earth, and had taken possession of all their wealth, you have restored them all their strength, and permitted them to depart with anger in their hearts; and now they will prepare to make war that they may revenge themselves upon us for all that has been done, and they will return within a short while and slay us all: Give us leave then, I pray you, to play another game with these Pándavas, and let the side which loses go into exile for twelve years; for thus and thus only can a war be prevented between ourselves and the Pándavas." And the Maháraja granted the request of his son, and messengers were sent to bring back the brethren; and the Pándavas obeyed the commands of their uncle, and returned to his presence; and it was agreed upon that Yudhishthira should play one game more with Sakuni, and that if Yudhishthira won, the Kauravas were to go into exile, and that if Sakuni won, the Pándavas were to go into exile; and the exile was to be for twelve years, and one year more; and during that thirteenth year those who were in exile were to dwell in any city they pleased, but to keep themselves so concealed that the others should never discover them; and if the others did discover them before the thirteenth year was over, then those who were in exile were to continue so for another thirteen years. So they sat down again to play, and Sakuni had a set of cheating dice as before, and with them he won the game.

Proposes the recall of the Pándavas, and settlement of the dispute by another game.

Return of the Pándavas.

The winners to obtain the entire Raj, and the losers to go into exile for twelve years in a jungle and one year in a city.

Yudhishthira loses the game.

Joy of Duhsásana.

When Duhsásana saw that Sakuni had won the game, he danced about for joy; and he cried out:—"Now is established the Raj of Duryodhana." But Bhíma said:—"Be not elated with joy, but remember my words: The day will come

Wrath of Bhíma.

when I will drink your blood, or I am not the son of Kuntí." And the Pándavas, seeing that they had lost, threw off their garments and put on deer-skins, and prepared to depart into the forest with their wife and mother, and their priest Dhaumya; but Vidura said to Yudhishthira:—"Your mother is old and unfitted to travel, so leave her under my care;" and the Pándavas did so. And the brethren went out from the assembly hanging down their heads with shame, and covering their faces with their garments; but Bhíma threw out his long arms and looked at the Kauravas furiously, and Draupadí spread her long black hair over her face and wept bitterly. And Draupadí vowed a vow, saying:—"My hair shall remain dishevelled from this day, until Bhíma shall have slain Duhsásana and drank his blood; and then he shall tie up my hair again whilst his hands are dripping with the blood of Duhsásana."

Kunti remains at Hastinápur.

Departure of the Pándavas.

Draupadí's terrible vow.

Affecting character of the foregoing tradition of the gambling match.

The foregoing tradition of the gambling match at Hastinápur is not perhaps so horrible as the fictions of Bhíma's encounters with the Asuras, but it appeals far more strongly to the feelings; and but for the depraved element involved in the idea of polyandry, would form one of the most attractive legends in the Mahá Bhárata. Throughout the narrative there is a truthfulness to human nature, and a truthfulness to that particular phase of human nature, which is prominently manifested by a high-minded race in its primitive stage of civilization. The real interest of the story begins from the moment that Draupadí was lost. As regards the truth of this incident there can be little doubt. Amongst the ancient Kshatriyas, where women were chiefly prized on sensual grounds, such stakes were evidently recognized. Draupadí herself, although shocked at the result, was by no means unfamiliar with the

Its truthfulness to human nature as manifested by a primitive but high-spirited race.

Wives not unfrequently lost and won at Kshatriya gambling matches.

Draupádi evidently familiar with the idea.

idea.[2] She protested, not on any ground of sentiment or matrimonial obligation, but solely on a technical point of law; and even after she had been dragged by the hair into the pavilion, and when she appealed to the Chieftains, in consideration of their own wives and children, to protect her from outrage, she still only asked for an answer to her question:—"Had Yudhishthira become a slave before he staked his wife upon the last game?" As to the treatment which she subsequently received, it was simply an assertion of the right of ownership which Duryodhana claimed over the wife of his kinsmen.[3]

Sensational character of the scene in which the blind Mahárája suddenly appears in the pavilion.

The most sensational scene in the narrative is the sudden appearance of the blind Mahárája, at the critical moment when Draupadí had received the worst affront, and Bhíma had uttered his terrible vow of revenge. It is easy to conceive that, but for this event, swords would have been drawn, and the gambling pavilion would have been a scene of blood-

[2] European traditions of gambling are by no means free from scandals of a similar character, although they were invariably regarded as secret. There is a horrible story of a gambler playing away his wife in Mr Ainsworth's romance of "Old St Paul's," which is apparently based upon some tradition of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century the ladies became gamblers, and not unfrequently paid their debts at the sacrifice of their honour. See Massey's *History of England*, Vol. II.

[3] An extraordinary interpolation in this portion of the narrative is worthy of notice, inasmuch as it affords a striking illustration of the reckless spirit in which the Brahmanical "arrangers" grafted their absurd inventions upon the authentic legend. Duhsásana is said to have tried to strip Draupadí in the presence of the assembly, but she prayed to Krishna, and the god miraculously interposed in her behalf, by so multiplying the number of her under garments, that as fast as Duhsásana removed one, another appeared in its room. At a subsequent period in the poem, when Krishna was acting as a mortal hero, and a friend to the Pándavas, Draupadí took occasion to thank him for the services he had rendered her in clothing her at such a perilous time. The incident is rendered more curious by the circumstance that the early fame of Krishna rested upon an exploit of the very opposite character, namely, his having carried away the clothes of the daughters of the cowherds while they were bathing.

shed. But in a moment all was hushed. The authority of the Maháraja was paramount, and no one attempted to interpose when the Pándavas left the place at his command. But when they had fairly departed for their own city, Duryodhana remonstrated with his father warmly and effectually; and the arguments which he urged are precisely those which would be urged in the present day by a Rájput Chieftain. The Pándavas had received such an affront that it was impossible they should either forgive or forget. They would be dishonoured for ever if they did not wipe out the insult with blood; and their revenge might prove fatal to the whole house of Bhárata. There was no other way by which a deadly feud could be prevented than by one party or the other going into exile, whilst the other remained in possession of the entire Raj.

Unpárdonable nature of the affront which had been put upon the Pándavas.

The concluding scene always forms an impressive picture in the mind of the Hindú. All is lost, and the Pándavas are doomed to years of exile. Duhsásana is dancing with joy at the thought that the final game was won, whilst Bhíma is vowing to drink his blood. Yudhishthira and his four younger brothers are leaving the assembly, covering their faces with shame, whilst Bhíma is throwing out his long arms as expressive of his rage. But the terrible figure of Draupadí, as she dishevels her long black hair, is the very impersonation of revenge; and a Hindú audience never fails to shudder at her fearful vow, that the straggling tresses shall never again be tied up until the day when Bhíma shall have fulfilled his vow, and shall then bind them up whilst his fingers are still dripping with the blood of Duhsásana.

Impressive picture of the departure of the Pándavas and Draupadí on their exile.

CHAPTER VIII.

SECOND EXILE OF THE PÁNDAVAS—THE TWELVE YEARS IN THE JUNGLE.

THE tradition of the second exile of the Pándavas is naturally separated into two portions, namely :—

Tradition of the twelve years of jungle life, to be distinguished from the fiction of the thirteenth year of city life.

1st, The wanderings in the jungle during twelve years.

2nd, The concealment in a city during the thirteenth year.

These two narratives are widely distinct in their origin and character. The story of the twelve years' wanderings in the jungle comprises some incidents which are based upon authentic tradition ; but the legend of the concealment in a city during the thirteenth year, so far as the Pándavas are concerned, is a palpable fiction. These points will be fully proved and elucidated hereafter; but for the present it will be convenient to bear in mind the broad distinction.

Theory that the twelve years of exile were originally twelve months, and that the thirteenth year was an intercalary month introduced to complete the solar year.

Besides this distinction, it should also be noticed that there are certain indications in the story of the twelve years' wanderings which lead directly to the inference that the period of exile was not twelve years but twelve months. The incidents of jungle life which can be referred to the authentic tradition are but few in number, and might easily have

occurred within the space of a single year. On the other hand, the story is very largely interpolated with mythical details and legends, which are so wildly supernatural in their character, that they may be safely treated as later interpolations. Accordingly, it follows that either the term of twelve years has been adopted for the purpose of affording sufficient time for the transactions to have taken place which are recorded in the myths; or that the myths have been introduced for the purpose of filling up the more lengthened period of exile. The hypothesis that the narrative of the thirteenth year is a later fiction confirms this view. The exile for twelve lunar months would not be equal to a solar year; and, therefore, it seems likely that this fiction of a thirteenth year originated in the idea that thirteen lunar months were necessary to the completion of a solar year.

Legend of the twelve years' exile, partly mythic and partly authentic.

The details of the legend of the twelve years' exile are thus divisible into two classes, viz.—

1st, The Mythic.

2nd, The Authentic.

But before attempting to carry out this division, it may be as well to glance at the general character of the legend; and this may, perhaps, be best gathered from the following narrative:—

Legendary sketch of the life of the Pándavas in the jungle.

Pilgrimages to holy places.

Instructions of Bráhman sages.

And it came to pass that the Pándavas, with their wife Draupadí, and their priest Dhaumya, wandered in the jungle for twelve years, and they fed on such game as the brethren shot on their way. And they made many pilgrimages to holy places, and fasted, and bathed, and performed religious worship; and they met with many holy Bráhmans and sages who instructed them in pious acts, and beguiled them with stories of ancient times, and

promised them that the day should come when they should be restored to the Raj. Sometimes they came to verdant places covered with flowers, where the trees were loaded with fruits, and many curious animals presented themselves; but at other times violent winds arose and blackened the sky with dust, and laid prostrate the largest trees, and then the rain would fall heavily, and the torrents would pour down from the mountains like rivers, and the roads would become so wretched that all the Pándavas, excepting Bhíma, would be unable to move, and the weary Draupadí would faint away; but then the giant Bhíma would carry his fatigued brethren and his afflicted wife upon his back and shoulders, and under his arms, and walk on as before.

Changes in jungle scenery. Occasional tempests.

The general character of the mythical portions of the legend of the exile is indicated in the foregoing paragraph; but in the present instance some more particular description is necessary, as the myths occupy a very large space in the Mahá Bhárata, and are not wholly devoid of historical significance. It has already been seen that in addition to the Brahmanical bearing of the Mahá Bhárata, there is an underlying effort throughout the poem to ascribe a divine origin to the Pándavas, and to associate them with the gods of the Hindús. In the story of their birth it is plainly asserted that Pándu was not their real father, but that they were directly begotten by the gods; that Yudhishthira was the son of Dharma, that Bhíma was the son of Váyu, and that Arjuna was the son of Indra, whilst Nakula and Sahadeva were the sons of the two Aswins. Accordingly, in the legend of their twelve years' wanderings, a number of additional myths have been inserted to confirm this relationship and association. These myths furnish a striking illustration of the wide difference between the mental

1st, Mythical portion of the legend of the twelve years' exile.

Description of the subject matter.

Introduced to confirm the myth that the Pándavas were the sons of the ancient gods of the Hindús.

culture of the European and that of the Hindús. To the former they must appear childish and unmeaning, but to the latter they are highly attractive, for they serve to amuse the dreamy and indolent intellect of the Hindú, whilst gratifying his religious instinct with the idea that he is storing up in his memory a rich stock of pious legends and divine mysteries.

Samples of the myths.

A few samples of these extraordinary myths may now be exhibited in a bare outline. On one occasion Yudhishthira was accosted by a divine being, who subsequently turned out to be his mythical father Dharma, or personified goodness. Dharma asked him a number of sphinx-like questions respecting human life and Bráhmanism, all of which were answered by Yudhishthira in a spirit of Brahmanical wisdom. Bhíma in his turn met with Hanuman, the monkey hero of the Rámáyana, who was mythically his own brother, as both were the sons of Váyu, or the wind. Bhíma, by virtue of his parentage, was proceeding along as swiftly as the wind; so that the earth trembled at his velocity, the largest trees were shaken to the ground, and one touch of his toe killed every lion, tiger, or wild elephant that sought to obstruct his passage. The attention of Hanuman was attracted by these marvels, and he obtained an interview with his mythical brother, by shrinking himself to the size of the smallest ape, whilst swelling out his tail to such an enormous bulk that it effectually stopped the progress of Bhíma. Hanuman then related to Bhíma the whole story of the Rámáyana, and swelled out his body until it was as lofty as the Vindhya mountain, and shone with a yellow radiance like that of

Dialogue between Yudhishthira and his mythical father Dharma, or personified goodness.

Interview between Bhíma and Hanuman, the monkey hero, who are both the mythical sons of Váyu or the wind.

Hanuman's supernatural shrinking and swelling.

molten gold. By Hanuman's aid Bhíma made his way to the gardens of Kuvera on the Himálaya mountain, and there he found flowers which had a thousand petals, and which had been eagerly desired by Draupadí because their smell was so delicious that it would make old people young again, and convert sorrow into joy.

Bhíma proceeds to the gardens of Kuvera, the god of wealth.

But of all the myths which have been introduced for the sake of associating the Pándavas with the gods, none are so famous as those which refer to Arjuna, the fabled son of Indra, who was himself the sovereign of the Vedic deities. Arjuna proceeded to the Himálaya mountains, by the advice of his mythical grandfather Vyása, for the sake of performing such penances as should propitiate the gods, and induce them to grant him celestial weapons which would ensure him the victory over Duryodhana and the Kauravas. On reaching the Mandara mountain he heard a voice in the sky calling upon him to stop; and Indra appeared in all his glory, and promised to give him the divine weapons provided he succeeded in propitiating the god Siva. Arjuna then entered upon a course of austerities so severe that Siva was perfectly gratified, but proved the valour of his worshipper by taking upon himself the form of a mountaineer and engaging Arjuna in single combat. Arjuna, unable to make any impression upon his enemy, at length discovered the deity, and prostrated himself at the feet of Siva; upon which Siva gave him one of his most powerful weapons. Subsequently the gods of the four quarters of the universe—Indra, Yama, Varuna, and Kuvera—presented themselves to Arjuna, and respectively furnished him with their own peculiar

Famous myths referring to Arjuna.

Arjuna practises austerities on the Himálaya mountains to induce the gods to grant him celestial weapons.

Indra refers him to Siva.

Arjuna propitiates Siva, who engages him in single combat.

Receives a weapon from Siva.

The gods of the four quarters of the universe present him with weapons.

weapons. Arjuna was then carried away in Indra's chariot to the city of Amarávatí, which is the heaven of Indra. There he spent many years in practising the use of arms; and at length was sent by Indra to make war against the Daityas of the sea.

Practises the use of arms in the heaven of Indra.

Mythic wars of Arjuna against the Daityas of the sea.

The mythic account of Arjuna's wars against the Daityas of the sea, is also worthy of notice if only as a creation of the imagination. On approaching the coast in a chariot which flew through the air, Arjuna beheld the sea rising in vast heaps, and saw ships laden with rubies, and fishes and tortoises as large as mountains. He blew his war shell and the Daityas trembled with fear, but in return they sounded their drums and trumpets so loudly that the monsters of the deep leaped above the waves. Thousands of Daityas rushed upon him, but he uttered powerful mantras as he discharged his arrows, and kept them all at bay. They rained fire, water, and mountains upon him, but he triumphed in the end and slew them all. Then the women came out screaming like cranes, but Arjuna passed them by and entered the city, where he saw chariots with ten thousand horses of the colour of peacocks. Meantime the women were terrified at the rolling of his chariot, and fled to their houses, whilst the noise of their ornaments resembled the falling of stones upon a mountain. After this victory Arjuna returned to Indra, and was rewarded with great praises; and the sovereign of the gods presented him with a chain of gold and a diadem, and with a war shell which sounded like thunder.

Chariot-horses of the colour of peacocks.

Historical significance of the foregoing myths.

These extravagant myths, unmeaning as they appear in themselves, are not without historical significance, when considered in connection with the

age in which the Mahá Bhárata assumed its present form. It was an age of Brahmanical revival; an age when the Bráhmans appealed to the old national gods of the Hindús against the practical atheism of the Buddhists; an age when the national traditions were remodelled, and ancient forms of worship were restored, for the purpose of enlisting the sympathies of the masses against the Buddhistic hierarchy, and re-establishing the caste supremacy of the Bráhmans. Under such circumstances the object of the Brahmanical compilers in inventing these absurd myths is sufficiently obvious; they desired to associate the ancient gods of India with the favourite heroes of the Hindús. The mythical wars of Arjuna against the Daityas would also appear to be not without significance, if the Daityas may be identified with the Buddhists; and this identification is not wholly without foundation. The Daityas possessed horses of the colour of peacocks, and peacocks are especially the sacred emblem of the Buddhists. Moreover the statement that the Daityas inhabited the islands of the sea is in perfect accordance with this view; as the Buddhists certainly took refuge in Burmah and Ceylon when driven out by the Bráhmans from the great Indian peninsula.

Favourite heroes of the Hindús associated with the old national gods in the age of Brahmanical revival against Buddhism.

Wars of Arjuna against the Daityas typical of the wars of the Brahmans against the Buddhists.

Having thus disposed of these somewhat distracting myths, it is refreshing to return to the more authentic and natural traditions of the exile of the Pándavas. From the simple incidents which follow, it would seem that the Pándavas never strayed to a great distance from their Raj; and that they only moved about in search of game, residing in some temporary hut or booth which they probably constructed for themselves. They were accompanied

2nd, Authentic portion of the legend of the twelve years' exile.

Indications that the Pándavas never wandered at a great distance from their Raj.

Life of the Pándavas in the jungle.

by their wife Draupadí, and are said to have also taken their priest Dhaumya with them; but the references to the latter personage are by no means satisfactory, nor is his presence in any way necessary to the story. Kuntí, as already stated, was left behind at Hastinápur. The five sons of Draupadí appear to have been sent to the house of her father Drupada; whilst Subhadrá, if she really were married to Arjuna, would seem to have returned to her father's house at Dwáraká, accompanied by her son Abhimanyu.

Four incidents in the jungle life of the Pándavas.

The incidents in the jungle life of the Pándavas, which are either authentic in themselves, or apparently have reference to actual events, are four in number, namely:—

1st, The capture of Duryodhana and Karna by the Gandharva tribe, and their subsequent release by the Pándavas.

2nd, The Vaishnava sacrifice performed by Duryodhana.

3rd, Yudhishthira's dream.

4th, The attempt of Jayadratha to carry off Draupadí.

1st, The capture of Duryodhana and Karna by the Gandharvas.

The first of these traditions, namely, the capture of Duryodhana and Karna by the Gandharva tribe, and their subsequent release by the Pándavas, may be related as follows:—

Tradition of the Kauravas going out into the jungle to mark the cattle, but really to spy out the Pándavas.

And it came to pass that whilst the Pándavas were sojourning in the jungle, Raja Duryodhana desired to spy out their misery, and flaunt his own magnificence before them. Now every three years it was the custom for the Kauravas to go out into the pastures and mark all the calves, and to renew the marks upon the cows; and as it was known full well that the Maháraja would forbid them from

going near the Pándavas, Duryodhana asked for leave to go out and mark the cattle. And the Maháraja gave his consent, and Duryodhana, and Karna, and many of the Kauravas departed out of the city, and after hunting in the jungle many days, they came near to the spot where the Pándavas were encamped. Now on a certain day Duryodhana sent [illegible] to pitch his tent by the side of a great lake, [illegible] happened that a band of the Gandharva tribe had [illegible]ched their tents on the same spot; and the servants of Duryodhana came back and told their master. Then [illegible] sent an insolent message to the Gandharvas, [illegible] them to take up their tents and depart with all [illegible] the Gandharvas went out and fought against [illegible] defeated him, and took him prisoner, [illegible] and many of the Kauravas. And some [illegible] told the Pándavas that their [illegible]rs by the Gandharvas; and [illegible] the Gandharvas and [illegible] them to restore the [illegible] And Yudhishthira gave a feast [illegible]uravas, and called Duryodhana [illegible] and [illegible]na affected to be much pleased, [illegible] was [illegible] and he was very wroth, and he would [illegible] but for the hope that the day would [illegible] fully avenged. Duryodhana then returned [illegible] of Hastinápur, and on a certain day there was a Council [illegible] in the palace of the Maháraja, and Bhíshma arose and praised the valour of the Pándavas and advised Duryodhana to make peace with them; but Duryodhana rose up and replied contemptuously, and left the assembly without speaking one word, and Bhíshma returned in great indignation to his own house.

Insolence of Duryodhana to the Gandharvas.

Duryodhana and Karna defeated and taken prisoners by the Gandharvas.

The Pándavas come to their rescue.

Mortification of Duryodhana.

His resentment at the public rebuke administered by Bhíshma.

The foregoing simple tradition calls for little remark, but it is difficult to avoid noticing its curious resemblance to a corresponding incident in the patriarchal period of Hebrew history. It will be remembered that when Lot had been carried away

Similarity between the rescue of Duryodhana by the Pándavas and the feast given by Yudhishthira, to the rescue of Lot by Abraham, and the feast of bread and wine.

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prisoner by the Assyrians, he was re[illegible] Abraham and his armed servants, and t[illegible] was celebrated by a feast of bread and w[illegible] similarity, however, by no means impli[illegible] two narratives refer to the same event, [illegible] that such little victories followed by a fe[illegible] characteristic of the patriarchal period.

2nd. The Vaishnava sacrifice performed by Duryodhana.

The second incident of the exile, n[illegible] Vaishnava sacrifice performed by Duryod[illegible] now be related as follows:—

Jealous desire of Duryodhana to perform a Rajasúya.

After these things, Raja Duryodhana resol[illegible] brate a Rajasúya, that should surpass the R[illegible] cousin Yudhishthira; and he called to his [illegible] "Let all things be got ready for [illegible]

Disqualified whilst the Maháraja and Yudhishthira are alive.

Then the priest answered:—"[illegible] perform a Rajasúya whilst [illegible] is sti[illegible] whilst your enemy Yud[illegible] also alive; [illegible] perform a Vaish[illegible] and all the Ra[illegible] your vassals [illegible] and this sacrifice is [illegible] a Raja [illegible] Duryodhana said:—"Be i[illegible] all things [illegible] made ready for a Vaishnav[illegible] messengers were sent to summon all the [illegible] ing to the Raj that they should att[illegible]

[illegible] Vaishnava sacrifice.

His brother Duhsásana insultingly invites the Pándavas to the sacrifice.

Now whilst the messengers [illegible] came into the heart of Duhsása[illegible] hana, to send a messenger to Yu[illegible] Pándavas to be present likewise; [illegible] ma[illegible] way and delivered the message to his breth[illegible]

Mild answer of Yudhishthira.

Yudhishthira, ever mild and dignified, thus mad[illegible] "Such a sacrifice as Raja Duryodhana is about [illegible] must redound to the exaltation of the whole ho[illegible] rata; but I and my brethren cannot attend unt[illegible] of our exile be accomplished."

Wrathful reply of Bhíma.

But Bhíma was [illegible] and he cried out to the messenger:—"Go an[illegible] Duryodhana, that when the thirteen years are [illegible] Yudhishthira will kindle such a sacrifice with his [illegible]

up all the sons of Dhritaráshtra." These duly delivered to Raja Duryodhana, but he word.

Duryodhana performs the Vaishnava sacrifice.

Raja Duryodhana performed the Vaishnava t the city, and distributed much provisions, sses, and rich gifts; and all those who were d that no one had ever before performed so ice, whilst those who were his enemies said ifice was not worth one-sixteenth of the udhishthira. And Duryodhana returned to se in great state, while the eulogists and went before him and opened their mouths in d celebrated the deeds of his fathers; and all ame out in great multitudes, and scattered arched grain along the road bef him. And o Duryodhana:—"By the ce of estiny you have brought o an en by your fortunate pow have davas, and shall perform the Rajasúya, I too nt and pay you homage." Duryodhana an- —"When I have slain the Pándavas, I will certainly Rajasúya, and you shall be there to do me Then Karna vowed a vow, saying:—"I will my feet, nor eat venison, and I will say nay to ho asks me for a favour, until I have slain nd the spies of the Pándavas carried intelli- hat occurred to Raja Yudhishthira; and when heard that Karna had bound himself by a rjuna, he was very sorrowful, for he knew that d come when there would be a great battle rjuna and Karna.

Divers opinions of his friends and enemies.

Returns to his palace in a great procession.

Congratulations of Karna.

Karna's vow to slay Arjuna.

Sorrow of Yudhishthira.

The foregoing tradition of the Vaishnava sacri- s performed by Duryodhana throws a

Review of the tradition of the sacrifice of Duryodhana.

William the Norman is said to have uttered a similar rough threat to that of Rúma. William was very corpulent and confined to his chamber. The French King remarked that his English brother was a long time lying in. William replied that there should be no lack of tapers at his churching, and he kept his word by ravaging France with fire and sword.

clearer light upon the institution known as the Rajasúya, inasmuch as it confirms the view that a Rajasúya was emphatically an assertion of sovereignty. Duryodhana could not assert his sovereignty because his father was still living, and because his enemy and rival, Yudhishthira, was alive also. Yudhishthira, on the other hand, had been in a condition to perform a Rajasúya, because he had established an independent Raj at Indra-prastha, and had succeeded in conquering all who had opposed him. It is, however, difficult to say in what respect the Vaishnava sacrifice differed from the Rajasúya. The worship of Vishnu appears indeed to have [illegible] comparatively modern origin, and to ha[illegible]o a period posterior to the age of anim[illegible] Under such circumstances, whilst the fact may be admitted that Duryodhana performed a sacrifice, the statement that it was a Vaishnava sacrifice may be regarded as a later interpolation.

Reasons why Duryodhana could not perform a Rajasúya as Yudhishthira had done.

Doubts respecting the Vaishnava sacrifice.

The third incident of the exile, namely, Yudhishthira's dream, is mythical in its present form, but still is evidently founded on authentic fact. The Pándavas prepared to move to another forest, apparently because the game had become scarce in the neighbourhood of their encampment; and this simple incident has been converted into a significant parable which bears traces of a Buddhistic origin. The parable is as follows:—

3rd. Yudhishthira's dream.

Apparently a Buddhistic parable.

Legend of the dream.

Now it so happened that Yudhishthira dreamed a dream, and in his dream the wild animals of the forest came to him weeping and trembling with fear, and they said to him:—

The animals of the jungle implore Yudhishthira to leave.

"We are the very few animals that have escaped your hands, and we therefore pray you to remove to another place that we

ourselves may be relieved from the terror of our lives, and may multiply again as before." And Yudhishthira was moved with sorrow, and when he awoke he told his dream to his brethren how that the animals had implored his mercy. So the Pándavas went away with their wife Draupadí and priest Dhaumya, and dwelt in the forest of Káma, and took up their abode in a hut, which was given to them by a holy Rishi who dwelt in that quarter.

The Pándavas move to the forest of Káma.

The fourth incident in the twelve years' exile, namely, Jayadratha's attempt to carry off Draupadí, throws a strange light upon the old jungle life, which many Kshatriya heroes appear to have occasionally led in days of yore. The tradition may be related as follows:—

4th. The attempt of Jayadratha to carry off Draupadi.

And it came to pass that one day the Pándavas went out to hunt in the forest, and they left their wife Draupadí, with her own consent, in charge of the priest Dhaumya. And it happened that Jayadratha, the Raja of Sindhu, was going on that day with a great train to Chedipur to celebrate his marriage with the daughter of the Raja of that city; and he passed by the hut, and saw Draupadí standing against a tree, and he was stricken with her beauty; and he said in his heart:—"If this beautiful damsel be not already married I will go no further, but will espouse her." And he sent a Chieftain who was with him to go and inquire her name and lineage; and the Chieftain alighted from his chariot and went to Draupadí, and inquired who she was, and told her his own name, and the name of Jayadratha, and also the names of the other Chieftains who were with them. Now when Draupadí saw that a strange man was coming towards her, she left the tree, and drew her veil around her; but when the Chieftain had finished speaking, she came forward and said:—"As there is neither man nor woman near, I must myself answer your questions: But I know who you are; your father is Raja of Saurashtra, and Jayadratha is my kinsman, for he has married Duhsalá, who is the daughter of Maháraja Dhritaráshtra: I am Draupadí, the daughter of Raja Drupada, and the wife of the five

Jayadratha, Raja of Sindhu, visits Draupadi in the absence of her husbands.

Falls in love with Draupadi.

Sends a Chieftain to inquire her name and lineage.

Conversation between the Chieftain and Draupadi.

Draupadi's proffered hospitalities.

Rajas of Indra-prastha: My husbands have gone out to hunt in the forest, but they will soon return: Alight, therefore, all of you, for Raja Yudhishthira will be gladdened at your coming, and will prepare a feast for you." So the man went and told Raja Jayadratha all that she had said; and Jayadratha got down from his chariot, he and six Chieftains who were with him, and entered the house like a jackal entering a pagoda. And Jayadratha asked Draupadí if all was well with her and her husbands; and she replied that all was well. And Draupadí desired that he would take a seat, and she offered to bring water to wash his feet, saying:—"The Pándavas will soon return with plenty of venison, and Raja Yudhishthira will rejoice to make you welcome."

Jayadratha enters the hut.

His wicked proposals to Draupadi.

Then Raja Jayadratha said to her:—"Put yourself to no trouble on my account, but get you into my chariot, that we may be happy together: The Pándavas have lost their Raj, and have become vagabonds in the jungle; so do not waste your attentions upon such husbands as these, but leave them to themselves and come with me, and I will make you my Ráni."

Rage of Draupadi.

Then Draupadí knit her brow and arose in anger, and said:—"Get you gone to your own land, for my husbands are Rajas of great renown, as deadly as serpents, and as powerful as Indra. Would you attack a wild elephant with a staff, or arouse a sleeping lion with a switch? Would you kick a tiger with your foot, or stroke a venomous serpent with your toes? Yet such will my husbands be unto you, unless you depart with all speed to your own home."

Her curses and threats.

Then Raja Jayadratha tried to soothe her, but she heeded not his words, but poured forth curses upon him, and threatened him with the arrow of Arjuna, and the mace of Bhima, and the wrath of all her husbands. And the Raja put forth his hand, and took hold of her garment; and she struck him with her fist and knocked him down. Then the Raja arose and seized her with all his strength, and placed her in his chariot, while she shrieked and cried out to the priest Dhaumya for help and succour. And Dhaumya came out and said:—"O Jayadratha, you are breaking the good old laws of the Kshatriyas, for by those laws you cannot take

Jayadratha carries away Draupadi in his chariot by main force.

Laws of the Kshatriyas concerning the carrying away of women.

away this woman until you have vanquished all her husbands." But the Raja heeded not his words, but placed Draupadí in his own chariot, and drove away, and the old priest followed after him weeping and lamenting.

All this while the Pándavas had been hunting in the forest, but Yudhishthira had seen many evil omens, and before the day was half spent, he persuaded his brethren to return. Now as they approached the hut they did not see Draupadí, but they beheld her little maid lying upon the ground and weeping violently; and the maid told them how Raja Jayadratha had carried away Draupadí, like a dog who has seized the sacrificial meat, and she pointed out the way he had gone, and the marks of his chariot-wheels. Then the Pándavas set off in hot haste, and soon approached their enemy, and so discharged their arrows that many of the Chieftains were killed. And the heart of Jayadratha was filled with dismay, and he set down Draupadí from his chariot, and drove with all speed to a thicket which was hard by. Then Bhíma said to Yudhishthira:—"Go home now with Draupadí, and with our brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva: As for me, though Jayadratha fled to the caves beneath the earth, and had Indra himself for his charioteer, he should not escape my hands." Yudhishthira replied:—"O my brother, Jayadratha has been very wicked, but he has married the sister of Duryodhana, and we may not kill our kinsman." But Draupadí was mad with anger at these words, and cried in a loud voice to Bhíma and Arjuna:—"If you have any regard for me you will slay this Jayadratha: He is the worst of Rajas and the vilest of men: The most exalted of all the ancient sages has said that the man who carries off the wife of another in times of peace must be pursued and put to death, even though he desist from his wicked purpose." Draupadí then returned to the hut, accompanied by Yudhishthira and Nakula and Sahadeva.

The Pándavas return to their hut and learn what has occurred.

Pursuit of Jayadratha.

Jayadratha abandons Draupadí and seeks to escape.

Yudhishthira's clemency.

Wrath of Draupadí.

Return of Yudhishthira with Draupadí.

When Bhíma and Arjuna heard the words of Draupadí, their wrath was kindled greatly against Jayadratha, and they pursued him hotly, and taunted him with his prowess in running away with their wife, and called upon him to turn

and fight them; but he was sore afraid, and would not turn lest they should slay him. Then Bhíma ran swiftly after him, and caught him by the hair of his head, and dragged him from his chariot to the ground, and kicked and beat him until his reason had almost left him, but Arjuna bade his brother to remember the words of Yudhishthira and to spare the life of his kinsman. So Bhíma cut off all the hair of Jayadratha's head excepting five locks, and agreed to spare his life on the condition that he went into the assembly of the Pándavas, and acknowledged himself to be their slave. So Jayadratha yielded, and Bhíma led him to the hut, and brought him into the presence of Yudhishthira, and his mind was well nigh gone. And when Yudhishthira saw his condition he ordered Bhíma to release him; but Bhíma refused unless commanded by Draupadí, because Jayadratha had become the slave of the Pándavas. Draupadí then came up, and said:—"As Jayadratha is become a slave by token of his five locks, I pray you to release him." So Bhíma released him, and he threw himself at the feet of Yudhishthira; and Yudhishthira bade him depart; and he hung down his head with shame and said not a word, but went his way much abashed to his own country.

Bhíma drags Jayadratha from his chariot and makes him a slave.

Humiliating submission of Jayadratha.

Draupadi orders his release.

The foregoing tradition of the attempt of Jayadratha to carry away Draupadí bears every impress of being authentic, but yet presents a few difficulties which seem to demand notice. The curious coincidence that Jayadratha should have made the attempt whilst on his way to marry another lady is perhaps sufficiently explained in the narrative, but it does seem remarkable that he should have been already married to Duhsalá; and it will appear hereafter that Duhsalá was still living. But perhaps the most important point of the tradition is the definition of the law of the Kshatriyas in such cases, to which both Draupadí and the priest Dhaumya seem to have appealed. According to Draupadí, the

Review of the tradition of Jayadratha carrying away Draupadi.

Jayadratha already married to Duhsalá, daughter of Maháraja Dhritaráshtra.

Laws of the Kshatriyas respecting the carrying away of women.

man who carried off the wife of another in time of peace was to be pursued to the death. According to Dhaumya, no man could rightfully carry away the wife of another unless he had first vanquished her husband or husbands. This subject however has already been discussed in a previous chapter, and it is only necessary to draw attention to the points raised.

CHAPTER IX.

SECOND EXILE OF THE PÁNDAVAS—THE THIRTEENTH YEAR IN A CITY.

Preparations of the Pándavas for dwelling disguised in a foreign city during the thirteenth year.

SHORTLY after the attempt of Jayadratha to carry away Draupadí, the period of twelve years' exile in the jungle is said to have drawn towards a close. Accordingly the Pándavas sent their priest, Dhaumya, to reside in the city of their father-in-law, Raja Drupada; whilst they and their joint wife Draupadí prepared to dwell in some foreign city, so perfectly disguised that the Kauravas should be unable to discover their place of concealment. The romantic character of the last stipulation, and the difficulty of reconciling a residence in a foreign city with the ancient condition of the Kshatriyas as Aryan settlers from a distant country, are sufficient to excite suspicions of the story, or at any rate of such portions of the story as refer to the Pándavas. Moreover the disguises assumed by the Pándavas and their joint wife appear to be highly improbable, whilst that of Arjuna is simply impossible. Then, again, the descriptions of battles are wild myths, in which armies are defeated by single-handed heroes, whilst one army falls down insensible at the mere sound of a war shell. At the same time, the main incident, which refers to an amour between a mighty warrior and the waiting-maid of a Ráni,

Difficulties in reference to the authenticity of the story.

Story of the amour between a Commander and a waiting-maid, an authentic tradition.

appears to be a relic of an ancient and authentic tradition, altogether differing both in civilization and religion from the traditionary history of the house of Bhárata. It belongs to a period long anterior to the rise of Brahmanical ascendancy, but comprises graphic pictures of the palace life of Hindú Rajas, in an age when young Princes were brought up with the women, and when eunuchs taught music and dancing to the young damsels in the zenana. Again, the story of the amour turns upon a dread of ghosts, which finds no expression in the traditions of the house of Bhárata; and it is especially remarkable that the Gandharvas, who are generally represented as a Hill tribe with whom the Kshatriyas at Hastináp ur were frequently at war, are introduced in the story as invisible demons, prone to love affairs with mortal women, and capable of wreaking their supernatural wrath upon mortal rivals. Accordingly an attempt will be made hereafter to separate the more authentic tradition, which refers to the amour, from the more improbable details which refer to the Pándavas. But in the first instance it seems necessary to reproduce the entire legend of the thirteenth year, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, and which may now be related without any further introduction, as follows:—

Wide difference between the tradition of the amour, and the traditions of the house of Bhárata.

Difference in the conception of Gandharvas.

Possible separation of the tradition of the amour, from the myth of the adventures of the Pándavas during the thirteenth year.

Now according to the rule of their exile it had been agreed that when the Pándavas had accomplished twelve years of wanderings in the jungle, they should take up their abode in any city they might choose, and remain there for a single year; and if during that year the Kauravas failed to discover them, they were to be restored to their Raj, but if the Kauravas discovered their disguise, they were to go for another twelve years into the jungle, and a thirteenth year in disguise, as before. Accordingly the Pándavas took

Fiction of the thirteenth year.

Stipulation as regards disguise.

counsel together, and especially with Arjuna, for he had visited many cities when he had gone into exile on account of Draupadí; and they resolved to go to the city of Raja Viráta, and to enter into the service of that Raja. And as they came near the city, they proceeded to the spot where the people of that place were accustomed to burn their dead; and there they laid aside their weapons and their garments, and disguised themselves; and they hid their weapons and their old garments in the branches of a tree, and they took a dead body which they found in that place, and hung it on the trunk of the tree, and cried out with a loud voice:—"This is the dead body of our mother, and it is to remain here for a whole year, after which we will take it down and burn it." So it was rumoured abroad throughout that country that a party of travellers had hung the dead body of their mother on the trunk of that tree, and would not return until a year had expired; and no man would go near the tree lest he should in any way offend the ghost of the dead mother of the strange men.

The Pándavas determine to go to the city of Raja Viráta.

Conceal their clothes and weapons on a tree in the place of burning.

Set up a dead body to guard the tree.

After this the Pándavas and Draupadí took other names,[1] so that neither Raja Viráta, nor the people of the city, should discover who they were; and they then went together to the gate of the palace, where the Raja and his Chieftains were sitting in Council. And Yudhishthira was the first to enter the assembly, and when those who were present saw him, they were amazed at his grace and majesty; and the Raja seeing that he was a stranger, asked him the reason of his coming. Yudhishthira answered:—"I am a man who has met with nothing but danger and calamity, and having heard many praises of your benevolent qualities, I have come to put myself under your protection that I may be relieved of my distress." The Raja then asked his con-

Pándavas and Draupadí assume new names, and apply for service to Raja Viráta.

Grace and majesty of Yudhishthira.

[1] Throughout this portion of the narrative in the Mahá Bhárata the new names are employed so long as the Pándavas continued in their disguise. But as these new names would only confuse the European reader, they are omitted from the text, and the old names preserved throughout the story. The order in which each of the Pándavas presented himself to the assembly has been slightly modified, as it is more convenient to represent them as entering the Hall in the order of their respective ages.

dition and descent; and he replied:—"I am a Bráhman, and for some time I was a retainer of Raja Yudhishthira, and his private companion, and I taught him the whole art of throwing dice." The Raja then said:—"You have come at a favourable moment, for I am in want of an instructor in the mystery of play, that I may defeat the tricks of artful gamblers; and I will show you the same favour and patronage as were shown to you by Raja Yudhishthira." When the Raja had engaged him, the giant Bhíma entered the assembly, clothed in black garments like a cook, and having an iron ladle in one hand, and a rusty scimetar in the other; and all present were struck with his strange appearance, and cried out:—"What wonderful giant is this?" Then the Raja asked him who he was, and Bhíma replied:—"I was cook to Raja Yudhishthira, and I understand the whole art of cookery, and I know the whole science of war, and my strength is such that it would be difficult for you to find a man who could cope with me." Then the Raja said:—"You have in your countenance all the marks of command and sovereignty, but as it is your own proposal, I make you the head of the cooks in my palace, so that the fear of your strength may keep all other cooks from wasting or thieving the victuals." Arjuna then came forward dressed as a eunuch, with earrings in his ears, and a woman's necklace round his neck, and a woman's bracelets upon his wrists; and he also wore a woman's vest to hide the scars which had been made upon his shoulder by his bow-string. And he said that he could sing, and also play upon musical instruments, and that he likewise understood dancing, and that he was well qualified to teach all those arts to ladies; so the Raja engaged him to perfect his daughter in the practice of music and dancing. After this Nakula and Sahadeva entered the assembly, and the Raja engaged Nakula to be master of his horse, and Sahadeva to be master of his cattle; and as Sahadeva had learnt the whole science of astronomy from his tutor Drona, he was also engaged to cast nativities and tell fortunes.

Yudhishthira engaged as a private companion and teacher of dice-playing to Raja Virata.

Bhima engaged as head cook.

Arjuna engaged as a eunuch to teach music and dancing.

Nakula engaged as master of the horse.

Sahadeva engaged as master of the cattle and caster of nativities.

Meanwhile the Rání had seen Draupadí from the terrace of her apartments, and had sent for her; and Draupadí

Draupadí enters the presence of the Rání.

presented herself to the Raja's wife, dressed in mean attire, with her hair untied according to her vow, but twisted into one string, like the tail of a serpent; and the women of the Raja were much pleased with her appearance, and they gathered around her, and the Rání asked her who she was. Draupadí answered:—"I am a maid-servant, and ready to serve any one who will employ me; and I have been servant to the wife of Krishna, and afterwards was servant to Draupadí, the wife of the Pándavas, who was very fond of me, and used to call me her dearest friend." The Rání said:—"You do not look like a servant, but rather like the wife of a Raja; and you are far too beautiful for me, for if I were to take you into my service, and the Raja should see you, he will never look on me any more; so I will have nothing to do with you." Draupadí replied:—"Have no fear of me on account of the Raja, for five Gandharvas keep constant watch over me; and if any one looks at me with an eye of desire, those Gandharvas will speedily put him to death: I can do every kind of service, but I will not wash the feet of any one, nor will I eat the victuals which any one may leave after a meal." So the Rání said:—"Since this is the case, I will take you into my service." And she engaged her.

The Rání objects to Draupadí's beauty.

Draupadí's story of her five Gandharvas.

Engaged as a maid-servant by the Rání.

Tranquil life of the Pándavas and Draupadí.

And the five brethren and their wife Draupadí dwelt many days in great comfort and tranquillity of mind in the palace of Raja Viráta, and they found much favour in the eyes of the Raja and the Rání. And many Chieftains came to Yudhishthira, and engaged him to play, and he played with them, and won much money; and he carried all that he had won and laid it before Raja Viráta, but the Raja gave it to him back again. And Yudhishthira divided the money into six portions, one portion for himself, and one for each of his brothers, and he himself kept Draupadí's portion. And all the presents that any one of the other brethren received, he carried to his elder brother Yudhishthira, and Yudhishthira divided it in like manner.

Mode in which the brethren shared their emoluments.

Raja Viráta holds a great festival.

Now when three months had passed away, Raja Viráta held a great festival; and all the fighting men and wrestlers,

and other athletes, came in great numbers from all the countries round about to exhibit their strength and skill before the Raja. And when the day of the festival had come, a mighty multitude were assembled from all the cities, and the Raja was there and all his Chieftains; and whenever one man overcame another, the multitude shouted aloud, and the Raja gave great gifts to the victor. Now one among the wrestlers, named Jimúta, had come from a far country, and he put all the rest to shame; for every man who stood up against him was conquered, so that, after a while, no man durst encounter him. Then the Raja and his Chieftains were sorely troubled that they had no wrestler in the Raj who could overthrow Jimúta; and the Raja called out in the assembly to know if there was any man who would fight Jimúta, but no man gave reply. Now after a while the Raja said:—"I have a warrior in my kitchen, whom I took into my service to be the head of all my cooks; and he boasted very much of his great strength and exceeding valour: Perchance he may be able to fight against this foreign wrestler." So the Raja sent for Bhíma. And Bhíma came out of the kitchen, and entered the presence of the Raja, and said:—"I am famished with hunger, and until I have eaten I cannot wrestle with this man Jimúta." So the Raja ordered that he should have as much victuals as he could eat, and the servants brought him heaps of provisions, such as would have sufficed for a great company; but Bhíma fell to and devoured them, to the amazement of all who saw him. And when Bhíma had finished eating, he went before the Raja, and the Raja bade him be of good courage. And Bhíma went out and challenged Jimúta to battle; and Jimúta came out in like manner, and accepted the challenge. Then Bhíma and Jimúta fought and struggled together like wild elephants, and they struck one another with their clenched fists; and all the other wrestlers looked on and marvelled at their fighting. Now when they had fought for a long while, and Jimúta was half spent, Bhíma rushed upon him, and seized him by the two legs, and raised him from the ground; and he whirled him several times round his own head, whilst Jimúta filled the

Assembling of pugilists and wrestlers.

Exhibitions of pugilism and wrestling before the Raja.

Superiority of Jimúta, a foreigner.

Trouble of the Raja that none of his own wrestlers could overcome Jimúta.

The Raja sends for Bhíma.

Bhíma enters the presence, but declines to fight Jimúta until he has satisfied his hunger.

Bhíma devours an enormous quantity of provisions.

Great battle between Bhíma and Jimúta.

Bhíma whirls Jimúta round by the legs, and dashes him against the ground.

air with his roaring. At last Bhíma dashed him against the ground with all his might, and Jimúta at that instant gave up the ghost and became a dead man.

Death of Jimúta.

Acclamations of the multitude and great joy of the Raja.

And when the multitude saw that Jimúta had been slain by Bhíma, they set up a loud shout and filled the air with their acclamations. And the Raja leaped from his seat in great joy that the foreign wrestler had been overcome by one of his own servants. And he bestowed very many gifts and commendations upon Bhíma. And all the Chieftains in like manner gave many presents to Bhíma, each one according to his rank. And when it was night, Bhíma carried all the gifts he had received to his elder brother Yudhishthira, that they might be divided according to custom.

Bhíma richly rewarded by the Raja and his Chieftains.

Great favour shown to Bhíma.

Bhíma's fights with wild beasts in the women's apartments.

After this Raja Viráta took a great liking to Bhíma, and showed him much favour; and sometimes he took Bhíma into the apartments of his women, and made him fight with lions, and tigers, and bears, and Bhíma always killed every beast with one blow of his fist; and the Raja and the ladies wondered at his prowess, and gave many gifts to Bhíma, and very large quantities of victuals, which he devoured as fast as they were brought to him. In like manner the Raja very often called for Arjuna, and for the Princess his daughter, and the other young damsels of the Court, who were taught by the new master; and the damsels danced and sang before the Raja, and gave him such delight that he gave many presents to Arjuna. At the same time the Raja was much pleased with Nakula, for whenever he went to the stables he found his horses in excellent order, and he gave rich rewards to Nákula. Sahadeva also received much praise and many gifts from the Raja; for he foretold very correctly everything before it happened, whilst the cattle under his care multiplied abundantly, and the cows yielded three or four times as much milk as they had ever done before.

Satisfaction of the Raja in the singing and dancing of his daughter.

Arjuna rewarded by the Raja.

Satisfaction of the Raja with Nakula and Sahadeva.

Commanding influence possessed by Kichaka, the brother of the Ráni.

Now there dwelt in the city of Viráta a warrior of great might and valour, named Kíchaka, and he was brother of the Ráni, and commanded all the forces of the Raja; and

all the affairs of the Raj were in his hands, and he did as he pleased, and the Raja feared him, according to the ancient saying, that the brother of the Rání is always to be feared by the Raja. And it came to pass one day that Kíchaka proceeded to the palace, and entered the apartments of the women to pay a visit to his sister, when his eye fell upon Draupadí, and he was stricken with her beauty; and he said within his heart, I have seen many lovely women, and I have many belonging to me, but never did I behold one so beautiful before; and he asked his sister who she was, and the Rání told him. And Kíchaka then said to his sister:— "She is worthy to be the mistress, and to have you for a waiting-maid: Contrive now, I pray you, that she may come to my house." The Rání replied:—"This woman says she has five Gandharvas who ever keep watch over her; and if any man speak to her the Gandharvas will kill him: Moreover, her conduct and behaviour are most excellent: Therefore I pray you to say nothing to her." But Kíchaka would not be refused, and after a while he prevailed with his sister, and she promised to send Draupadí to his house. So Kíchaka left his sister and went to Draupadí, and began to praise her, and said:—"Never before have I beheld so beautiful a woman as you are; and henceforth I will be your slave." But Draupadí replied:—"Do not speak such words to me, for there are five lions who keep guard over me, and if you value your life you will not come near me." And Kíchaka laughed, and went his way to his own house.

Kíchaka prevails with the Rání to send Draupadí to his house.

A short while after Kíchaka had gone out of the palace, the Rání said to Draupadí:—"I am very thirsty: Take this cup to my brother's house and bring it me back filled with wine." Draupadí answered:—"I cannot go to his house, as I observe that he is a man wanting in modesty: So I pray you to send another messenger." But the Rání would not, but put the cup upon a golden salver, and placed the salver upon the head of Draupadí, and bade her carry it to Kíchaka; and Draupadí went away weeping, but she looked at the world-enlightening Sun, and prayed to the bright god

Draupadí sent by the Rání to bring a cup of wine from the house of Kíchaka.

Draupadí prays to the Sun for succour.

for succour. And Draupadí carried the cup to the house of Kíchaka, and when she had entered in, Kíchaka ran to meet her, and said:—"You are very welcome, for I, who have the whole Raj at my command, am now your slave, and I will give you all I possess; and all my women shall be your servants, if you will only become my wife." Draupadí answered:—"Your sister sent me to you with this cup: She is very thirsty, and is waiting for me: Do not detain me or use me ill, or evil may befall you." Kíchaka then took Draupadí by the right hand, but she drew her hand back again. Kíchaka then seized her cloth, but Draupadí struck him in the face, and ran out of the house. Then Draupadí went with all speed to the Court hall of the palace, where Raja Viráta and his Chieftains were sitting in Council; and she was weeping very bitterly, and Yudhishthira and Bhíma were present and saw that she was weeping, but they took no notice of her. Now before Draupadí could speak a word to the Raja, Kíchaka ran after her, and followed her into the presence of the Council; and he seized her by the hair before them all, and smote her with his foot. Bhíma looked on, and bit his lip with his teeth till the blood rushed from it; but he could not interfere because his elder brother Yudhishthira had so commanded him. And Draupadí was exceedingly wroth with her husbands, and also with Raja Viráta; and she cried out:—"It is very unbecoming of the Raja, that he should permit a poor woman who has entered his service to be kicked before his face." The Raja answered:—"I do not know what has passed between you and Kíchaka before you entered my presence: How then can I interfere?" Draupadí then told to the Raja all that had taken place, and all who heard her thought that Kíchaka had behaved wickedly towards her; but Yudhishthira, being fearful lest they should be discovered, rebuked her, saying:—"Why do you make your lamentations before persons who have nothing to do with you? You ought to go into the presence of the Rání." So Draupadí went weeping to the Rání, and told her what Kíchaka had done, and the Rání said that she would speak

Kichaka affronts Draupadi.

Draupadi escapes from the house and runs to the Council hall, followed by Kichaka.

Bhíma commanded by Yudhishthira not to interfere.

The Raja refuses to interfere.

Draupadí rebuked by Yudhishthira.

Draupadí vainly appeals to the Ráni.

to her brother. But Draupadí answered:—"As you cannot smite him, why trouble yourself to speak? I have a guardian near, and the hour is not far distant when he will avenge my wrongs."

Draupadí awakens Bhíma in the night, and demands revenge.

Now when the night had fully come, and every one in the palace was asleep, Draupadí went out and found Bhíma, who was in a deep slumber. So she awoke him, saying:—"What is this sleep of oblivion in which you are indulging? Am I not your wife, upon whom Kíchaka has looked with a wanton eye, and do you not care for the affront? Where is your sense of honour now, and what will the world say if you do not revenge my wrongs?" Then Bhíma rose up in a rage, and said:—"Why is your countenance changed, and what has Kíchaka done unto you?" Draupadí answered:—

Draupadí's bitter complaints of the insults she has received from the Kauravas, Jayadratha, and Kíchaka.

"What would you have me say whilst my heart is still bleeding from the insults I have received? Three times have I fallen into the hands of shameless men, and notwithstanding all the hardships I have endured for the sake of my husbands, not one of them will protect me: First you gave me up to the Kauravas, who treated me as though I had been a slave girl: Then Jayadratha carried me away into the jungle: And now Kíchaka has stretched out the hand of rudeness against me, and has seized me by the hair and smitten me with his foot in the presence of yourself and Yúdhishthira, and before the Raja and all his Council: Yet who are my husbands that they feel no concern for this that I have suffered? But unless you punish this Kíchaka I will take poison: Yudhishthira, who was once a great Raja, has become a mere servant, and teaches people how to gamble: As for you, Bhíma, who once had a thousand slave girls at your command, each as beautiful as the Rání, I have been obliged to see you fighting lions, tigers, bears, and elephants for her amusement, until I have been so humbled that I could have died with spite: Then Arjuna has put on the appearance of a female, and wears a woman's necklace and bracelets, and makes sport for the Raja's women; whilst Nakula has settled down in the stable, and Sahadeva is keeping cattle and telling fortunes: Meantime under your

Complains of the low occupations of her husbands in the Court of Raja Vráta.

Complains of her position as the favourite maid-servant of the Raja.

auspices I have become the favourite female servant of Raja Viráta, who refuses to take his powdered sandal wood from anybody else: And now what further vexations must I endure on your account?"

Bhíma rebukes her.

When Draupadí had finished speaking, Bhíma turned to her and said:—"When noble women are compelled by their evil fortune to take refuge in foreign countries, they are ever exposed to like evils: Was not Sítá carried away by Rávana, when she was wandering in the jungle with Raja Ráma? When the Kauravas affronted you at the gambling match, I was desirous of putting them to death by my own hand, but I was withheld by my elder brother Yudhishthira: So again when I had resolved to slay Jayadratha, Yudhishthira would not give his consent, but permitted him to go away alive: Then, too, when Kíchaka insulted you in the presence of the Raja, I would have punished him upon the spot, but Yudhishthira forbade me: Why, then, do you thus torment me? I must be obedient to my elder brother: But in the matter of this Kíchaka I will get you redress: Do you to-morrow morning affect to agree to all that he desires, and appoint to meet him at midnight in Arjuna's music and dancing-room; and while he is waiting there for you I will teach him a lesson that will most certainly satisfy you."

Explains how Yudhishthira has in every case prohibited his interference.

Engages to punish Kíchaka.

Delight of Draupadí at the prospect of obtaining revenge.

When Bhíma had thus promised to chastise Kíchaka, Draupadí was filled with joy, and agreed to act according to his words; and when the night was over she returned to the apartments of the women, and did her duty as she was accustomed. Now it so happened that after a while Kíchaka paid another visit to his sister, the Rání; and he began, as his custom was, to set himself off in the presence of Draupadí; and he said to Draupadí:—"Raja Viráta cannot interfere with me, for all his affairs are in my hands: If therefore you refuse any longer to become my wife, I shall carry you away by my own power, and the Raja will say no more to me to-day than he did yesterday: But if you will accept me as a husband, and enter my house, I will do you no harm; and I will give you a hundred pieces of gold every day, and a hundred slaves and slave girls to wait upon you, and a cha-

Kíchaka's second visit to the Rání.

Kíchaka threatens to carry away Draupadí.

Lavish offers of Kíchaka to Draupadí.

riot drawn by mules to be always at your command." And Draupadí answered:—"How can I refuse such generosity? But I yield on one condition only: I know that you admit many friends into the apartments of your women, and if my consent should be known unto them, it may bring both you and me to infamy: Moreover, I have five Gandharvas who watch over me; and should they discover this matter they will slay you." So it was agreed between them that at midnight Draupadí should grant a meeting to Kíchaka in the music and dancing-room.

Draupadí offers to meet him at midnight in the music and dancing-room.

Kíchaka then left the palace and went to his own house, and his heart was filled with delight; but he was so impatient to meet Draupadí, that the remaining half of the day appeared to him like half a month, and every moment seemed as long as a year. And when it was night he arrayed himself in new garments, and perfumed himself with the choicest odours, and he was more handsome and resplendent than he had ever been before, in the same way that a lamp becomes most brilliant just before it goes out. Meanwhile Draupadí had gone to Bhíma, and told him all that she had done, and Bhíma said that he would slay Kíchaka in such a fashion that no man should discover who had done it. So when the hour of midnight arrived, Kíchaka went with all joy and expectation to the music and dancing-room, and seeing in the darkness that somebody was in the corner, he thought that it was Draupadí, and put out his hand to take hold of her; but at that moment Bhíma arose from the corner in great wrath, and seized him by the hair of his head, and would have dragged him to the ground, but his locks were well oiled, and they slipped through the fingers of Bhíma. Now Kíchaka was a warrior of great valour and exceeding strength, and he so fell upon Bhíma that they struggled mightily together, and they fought with their clenched fists, and tore each other with their nails, and strove to throw each other to the ground. And Bhíma was brought to the earth, but he put forth all his strength, and seizing hold of Kíchaka he whirled him swiftly round his head and dashed him against the ground; and he put his

Impatience of Kíchaka.

Kíchaka proceeds to the music and dancing-room, and is seized by Bhíma.

Battle between Kíchaka and Bhíma.

Bhíma slays Kíchaka and rolls his flesh and bones into a ball.

knee upon the breast of Kíchaka, and kneaded him as a baker kneads bread; and he kicked him and pommelled him until the soul of Kíchaka departed out of his body, and he broke every one of his bones into the smallest pieces, and formed his body into a large ball of flesh. Bhíma then lighted a lamp, and brought in Draupadí, and showed her all that he had done, saying:—"This will I do unto any man that offends you." And Draupadí rejoiced greatly, for she saw that she had been fully avenged.

Joy of Draupadi.

Then Bhíma departed out of the palace and went to the cook-room and fell asleep; but Draupadí went and called the watchmen of the palace, saying:—"Kíchaka forced me to grant him a meeting in the music and dancing-room, notwithstanding all my warnings that the Gandharvas would slay him; and lo and behold when he came to me, the Gandharvas, who are my defenders, fell upon him and slew him, and his dead body is lying there." So the watchmen lighted a lamp and went in, and they beheld the dead body of Kíchaka like a ball of flesh, and they said one to the other:—"Surely no man hath done this; it must be the Gandharvas." And as soon as it was morning there was a great uproar amongst the people, and the whole city was in commotion, for it was said that the mighty Kíchaka, who commanded all the soldiers of the Raja, had been put to death by the Gandharvas, out of his love for a woman. And the brothers of Kíchaka hastened to the spot, and saw the dead body, and desired to take it away to the place of burning; and when they saw all the women of the palace gathered together, their eyes fell upon Draupadí, and they said one to the other:—"This is the woman on whose account our brother has been murdered: We cannot kill her, because it is not proper to kill a woman: Let us then burn her with the dead body of Kíchaka, and since he died out of love for her let him espouse her in the world of ghosts." They then went into the presence of the Raja, saying:—"We wish to burn the waiting-maid, who caused the death of Kíchaka, along with the corpse of our brother." And the Raja was in awe of his wife's brethren, and he dared not

Draupadí calls in the watchmen, and declares that Kíchaka has been slain by the Gandharvas.

Great commotion in the city.

Brothers of Kíchaka carry away his dead body, and prepare to burn Draupadi alive on his funeral pile.

forbid them; for it is an old proverb that the brother-in-law is master of the house. So they seized Draupadí by force, and bound her with cords and threw her upon the bier of Kíchaka, and went out of the city to burn her alive together with the dead body; and Draupadí, seeing that her life was in mortal peril, shrieked and screamed in piteous tones, and the air was filled with her cries.

Screams of Draupadí for succour.

All this while Bhíma was lying asleep in the cook-room, when he was awakened by the cry of Draupadí; and he arose up and hastened out of the palace to follow her to the burning ground; and he went to the city wall and threw himself from the ramparts, for he would not go through the city gate lest he should be known. Then Bhíma drew his hair over his face, so that no man could discover him, and tore up a large tree by the roots, and carried it on his shoulders as a club, and went with all speed to the place of burning. And as he came near, Draupadí saw him and knew who he was; and when the brethren of Kíchaka beheld Bhíma approaching them, they were seized with trembling, and said:—"This is the Gandharva! Let us fly and leave this woman, who is the cause of all our sorrows." Thus saying they left Draupadí and the dead body of Kíchaka, and fled towards the city, and Bhíma pursued them hotly with his club, and slew them all. And Bhíma returned to Draupadí, and released her; and they went back to the city by different ways, so that no one might know that the Raja's cook was the terrible Gandharva.

Bhíma hastens to the rescue of Draupadí.

Mistaken for the Gandharva.

Flight and death of the brethren of Kíchaka.

Now when Draupadí had reached the palace, the city was in a greater uproar than before; and when the Chieftains and Ministers saw her they were in much alarm; and they went to the Raja, and said:—"This woman is very beautiful, and her manner and discourse are such that all who see her are stricken with her; and yet if a man attempts only to speak to her he is slain by the Gandharvas; and now if she remain any longer in the city we know not how many more young men may perish in like manner." And the Raja answered not a word, for he was in a greater alarm than any of the others; but after a long while he

Draupadí returns to the palace.

The Chieftains in their alarm complain to the Raja.

said:—"I will think more of this matter; but go now, I pray you, and burn the dead bodies of Kíchaka and his brethren."

Timid directions of the Raja to the Ráni for getting rid of Draupadí.

All this while the Raja was so frightened at the Gandharvas, and so fearful lest he should offend them, that he would consult with none of his Council respecting them. But he called for his Rání, and said to her:—"This maid servant of yours is an evil witch, who must be sent out of the city to some other quarter, so that this country may be purged from her craft: But do you break the matter to her so that she may not know that I have said it, lest the Gandharvas should wreak their vengeance upon me."

Draupadí enters the music and dancing-room.

Now by this time Draupadí had entered the palace, and proceeded to the music and dancing-room, where Arjuna was busy instructing the damsels; and the damsels came up and offered her many congratulations, seeing that she had escaped from the hands of Kíchaka and his brethren. And Arjuna feigned not to know what had happened, and he said to her:—"Tell me, I pray you, how it was that Kíchaka and his brethren have been slain." But Draupadí was very wroth with Arjuna, for he had heard her cries and had not come to succour her, and she said to him:—"What have you to do with men and women? Your duty is to teach the damsels to sing and dance; and men and women can have no interest for you." And Draupadí turned her back upon Arjuna, and took no further heed of his words.

Manifests her anger against Arjuna for not coming to her rescue.

The damsels lead Draupadí into the presence of the Ráni.

After this the damsels took Draupadí by the hand, and led her away into the presence of the Rání. And when the Rání saw Draupadí, she said to her:—"Raja Viráta is in great alarm at you and your Gandharvas, and has ceased to call me to his presence: This day all my brethren have been slain because of you, and to-morrow I may lose my husband likewise: So I will not keep you any longer in my service, and you must go now to some other city."

The Ráni dismisses Draupadí from her service.

Draupadí's reply.

And Draupadí answered:—"Your words are true, but when thirteen days are over, the year of my service will have expired, and then my Gandharvas will bestow blessings upon you, and lead me away to another place." And the

General fear to offend Draupadí.

Rání made no reply, but told the Raja all that Draupadí had said; for since the slaughter of Kíchaka and his brethren, no one durst say a word that could offend Draupadí.

Proceedings of the Kauravas during the thirteenth year. Fail to discover the Pándavas.

Now all this while the Kauravas had been dwelling in the city of Hastinápur, and they had sent spies to all the quarters of the earth to discover the city where the Pándavas were residing, and none had brought back any tidings of the brethren. But it so happened that certain of the spies had proceeded to the city of Raja Viráta, and they brought the news that Kíchaka had been slain on account of a woman. At this time the Raja of Trigarta, whose name was Susarman, was staying at Hastinápur; and whilst the Kauravas were consulting as to what should be done, Susarman arose and said:—"The spies from the city of Viráta have told us that our enemy Kíchaka is dead: Let us now join our forces and attack the Raja of Viráta, for his army is powerless by reason of the death of their Commander." And Karna said:—"The counsel of Susarman is wise: We cannot be ever thinking about the Pándavas, so let us go forth and make war against the Raja of Viráta." And Duryodhana and all the Council agreed to the war.

Spies bring the news of the death of Kichaka.

Susarman, Raja of Trigarta, proposes an invasion of the Raj of Viráta, which is approved by the Kauravas.

Plan of campaign: Susarman to invade the Raj from the north and Duryodhana from the south.

After this the Kauravas assembled all their forces, and Susarman brought up all his army: and it was agreed between them that Susarman should march out first and invade the country of Viráta on the northern side, and that Duryodhana should then enter the country on the southern side and near unto the city of Viráta. And Susarman did as was determined upon, and he set out on the seventh day of the full moon, and invaded the northern quarter of the Raj of Viráta with all his army, and carried away much cattle; and it so happened that the day he carried away the cattle was the last day of the thirteenth year of the exile of the Pándavas. Now when the herdsmen saw their cattle in the hands of the enemy, they went with all speed to the city, and laid their complaints before Raja Viráta, and the Raja sent messengers to all quarters with a hue and cry to the ryots to make their escape with their flocks and herds; and the Raja mounted his chariot, and set out with a large army

Invasion of Susarman in the northern quarter.

The Herdsmen carry the tidings to Raja Viráta.

The Raja goes out to battle.

to drive out the invaders, and all the Pándavas save Arjuna went with him. And when the day was far spent, the army of Viráta came up with the army of Susarman, and they fought fiercely one with the other, and many warriors were slain on either side. Then Raja Susarman sent a challenge to Raja Viráta, and the two Rajas fell to in single combat, until the sun had long set, and the darkness prevented their seeing each other, and the fighting came to a stand. Then the ground was sprinkled with water and the dust was well laid, and presently the moon arose and the battle-field was as light as day; and the combat was renewed between the two Rajas. And Susarman prevailed against Viráta, and bound him hand and foot with a rope, and cast him upon his own chariot, and drove away with his own people.

Single combat between Susarman and Viráta.

Defeat and capture of Viráta.

When Yudhishthira saw that Raja Viráta was carried away captive by Susarman, he said to his brother Bhíma:—"For one entire year have we eaten the Raja's rice, and shall we not deliver him out of the hands of his enemy?" So Yudhishthira stayed to command the army; and when the morning began to dawn, Bhíma went out with his two brothers Nakula and Sahadeva, and set off in pursuit of Susarman; and they overtook him, and slew his charioteer, and delivered Raja Viráta out of his hands; and Bhíma seized Susarman by the hair, and put chains upon his hands and a collar upon his neck, and carried him away prisoner. And all the cattle that had been carried away by Susarman were recovered, and there was also abundance of spoil; and Raja Viráta was loud in the praises of Yudhishthira and his brethren. And Bhíma led Susarman into the presence of the Raja; and when Susarman had tendered his submission, the Raja permitted him to depart to his own country.

Bhíma rescues the Raja, and takes Susarman prisoner.

Now while Raja Viráta and all his Chieftains had gone away to the northern country to fight against Susarman, Duryodhana and the Kauravas came with a great army and invaded the southern country, and they carried away much cattle. And the Chief of the herdsmen hastened to the city to carry the tidings to the Raja; but there were no warriors in the city save the Raja's young son Uttar, and Arjuna, who

Invasion of Duryodhana in the southern country.

No warriors left in the city excepting Uttar and Arjuna.

was the music and dancing-master. And Uttar was but a boy, and he had been bred up in the apartments of the women, and knew nothing of war; and when the Chief of the herdsmen told him that the Kauravas had carried away the cattle, he was in sore dismay. And the Chief of the herdsmen said to Uttar:—"The Raja has left the Raj in your charge, and has often boasted of your prowess; so now you must go out and make war against the Kauravas, and bring back all the stolen cattle." And Uttar replied:—"I would go and fight these Kauravas with all readiness, but I have no man to drive my chariot; and how can I go out to battle without a charioteer?" So saying Uttar rose up, and entered the palace, and boasted before the women, saying:—"If I had but a charioteer I would go forth and conquer the Kauravas." And Draupadí heard his words, and said:—"O Uttar, the music and dancing-master has often driven the chariot of Arjuna to battle; and he will now peradventure drive your chariot against the Kauravas." So Uttar called his sister, whose name was Uttará, and desired her to ask her teacher to become his charioteer; and she did so, and Arjuna consented to go. Then Arjuna called for a coat of mail, and arrayed himself in armour; and when the damsels saw what he was doing, they began to laugh, saying:—"What has a music and dancing-master to do with the weapons of men?" Meanwhile Uttar commanded his servants to put the weapons into his chariot; and he ascended the chariot, and desired Arjuna to mount likewise, and to drive away with all speed. And when the damsels saw Arjuna driving away, they cried out:—"We commit Uttar into your charge: Take heed that he returns in triumph, and brings us plenty of silks and cloths as spoil." Arjuna replied:—"After a victory all things may be obtained." So saying he drove away towards the south to do battle against the Kauravas.

Youth and ignorance of Uttar.

The Chief of the herdsmen urges Uttar to go out against the Kauravas.

Uttar pleads that he has no charioteer.

Boasts before the women.

Arjuna agrees to go.

Mirth of the damsels at seeing Arjuna putting on armour.

The damsels pray Arjuna to bring home plenty of spoil.

Now when Arjuna had driven Uttar within sight of the army of the Kauravas, the heart of Uttar failed him, and his hair stood on end with terror. And Arjuna said:—"How can I face such mighty warriors as these?" And when Uttar heard

Cowardly fear of Uttar on beholding the Kauravas.

these words, he fell down in the chariot in a swoon. Then Arjuna tried to comfort him, but when he opened his eyes, he implored Arjuna to turn the chariot and drive back to the city. But Arjuna said:—"Let not your enemies see your alarm or they will rejoice greatly: You should not have commanded me to drive you here; but now that I am come, I cannot turn back: When you were coming out you boasted of your prowess before the women; and will you now excite their laughter by running away?" Uttar replied:—"I can endure the laughter of the women, but I cannot face this field of battle." So saying Uttar leaped from the chariot and ran away towards the city; and Arjuna leaped down likewise, and ran after him. And the Kauravas looked on, and saw that it was Arjuna running after the son of Raja Viráta; and they said:—"The thirteenth year is not yet over, and if this be Arjuna then the Pándavas must go again into exile." And there arose a great discussion about the thirteenth year; but Bhíshma said:—"The thirteenth year has already passed away."

Uttar runs away but is pursued by Arjuna.

The Kauravas discover Arjuna, and discuss whether the thirteenth year is really over.

Meanwhile Arjuna had caught Uttar by the hair, and drawn him back to the chariot, and placed him on the driving seat; and he bade Uttar drive to the burning ground where the weapons of the Pándavas were hung upon a tree. And when they came to the tree Arjuna took his own weapons, and told Uttar the names of himself and all his brethren; and when Uttar knew that Arjuna was with him, he said:—"I am no longer afraid of the army of the Kauravas." And Uttar drove the chariot back to the field, and Arjuna sounded his shell and twanged his bow, and challenged the Kauravas one by one to single combat; and he fought and conquered every one, and defeated the whole army of the Kauravas, whilst the cattle returned to the city of their own accord. Then Arjuna blew his shell of triumph, and all the army of the Kauravas, excepting Bhíshma only, fell down insensible like men that were asleep; but Arjuna would not slay them, but only commanded Uttar to carry away their fine garments. And when the Kauravas awoke and saw what had

Arjuna brings back Uttar, and makes him drive the chariot.

Recovers his own weapons and discovers himself to Uttar.

Arjuna defeats the Kauravas, and recovers the cattle.

been done, they returned in great shame and sorrow to the city of Hastinápur.

Now after this great victory, Arjuna and Uttar returned to the city, and as they went they saw many of the soldiers of the Kauravas flying from the field; but Arjuna said to them:—"Fear not, for I will not slay a man unless he be in the field of battle, and fugitives and captives are as women in my eyes." And Arjuna and Uttar halted without the city; and Arjuna laid aside his arms, and put on his disguise as before; and messengers were sent on to the city to make known the victory, and the recovery of all the cattle.

Arjuna and Uttar return to the city.

Arjuna's forbearance as regards fugitives and captives.

Arjuna and Uttar halt without the city, but send tidings of the victory to the Raja.

Now soon after Arjuna and Uttar had gone out against the Kauravas, Raja Viráta was returning towards the city in triumph, having routed Raja Susarman and all his army. And the whole city went out to meet Raja Viráta, and to welcome him back with great joy; but Uttar was not amongst them. So the Raja inquired for his son, and learned that he had gone towards the south to fight the Kauravas, and that the music and dancing-master had gone with him to drive his chariot; and the Raja said:—"As I myself have defeated Susarman and all his army, the men whom Uttar has gone out to fight must be but weak and few; but I do not like that the music and dancing-master should have gone as charioteer, as he may have been terrified at the battle, and have taken flight." Yudhishthira replied:—"No defeat can befall that person who has had this music and dancing-master for his charioteer." At this moment the messengers of Uttar arrived at the city, and told the Raja how the Kauravas had been defeated and the cattle recovered from their hands; and Yudhishthira said that the victory was most excellent, but was to have been expected from the valour of the charioteer. But the Raja feigned not to hear the words of Yudhishthira, and cried out:—"Since I have defeated Susarman, and my son has defeated Duryodhana, let the drums be beaten at all the gates, and musical instruments be played in all the streets, and the city be dressed out in flowers and flags; and let all the most beautiful damsels put

Return of Raja Viráta after the defeat of Susarman.

The Raja hears that Uttar has gone out to battle, but distrusts the bravery of the music and dancing-master.

Yudhishthira praises the valour of the music and dancing master.

The Raja orders preparations for receiving his victorious son.

on clean garments, and array themselves in all their jewels, and go forth and sing the songs of triumph; and let all the tribes go forth with them and welcome the return of the victorious hero Uttar." Then Raja Viráta ordered the dice to be brought, and called upon Yudhishthira to play a game; but Yudhishthira objected, and said:—"It is laid down in the Sástras that no man should play with another who is elated with joy; and this day you are elated with joy." But Viráta persisted, and Yudhishthira at last sat down to play; and in the middle of the game the Raja said:—"Take notice how my son has fought and defeated the Kauravas!" Yudhishthira replied:—"It is not surprising that your son conquered the Kauravas, when he has had the music and dancing-master for his charioteer." Then Raja Viráta flew into a rage, and said:—"Let me forbear as long as I will, you are determined still to chaunt the praises of this music and dancing-master: What is a eunuch that his feats should be so applauded? When my son has gained the victory, no man of sense would have brought forward the name of another: So if you wish any longer to retain my friendship, let me hear no more of this music and dancing-master." Yudhishthira answered:—"In a field where such warriors as Bhíshma, and Drona, and Karna, and Duryodhana are in action, your son is by no means capable of sustaining a battle." Then Raja Virát was exceedingly wroth, and he cried out:—"Is there no one here to give this foolish fellow his answer, and to stop his mouth?" And the Raja dashed the dice which he held in his hand so violently at the face of Yudhishthira that the blood fell from his nose, but Draupadí, who was standing by, caught the blood in her veil. At this same instant the Raja's servants came in and said that Uttar and his charioteer had returned to the palace, and were standing at the gate waiting to salute the Raja; and the Raja desired that they might be called in, but Yudhishthira cried out:—"Keep back the music and dancing-master, for if he should see my face besmeared with blood, he will slay the man who caused it, and all his people." So Uttar was brought in

Sits down to play with Yudhishthira.

Yudhishthira ascribes the victory to the music and dancing-master.

Wrath of the Raja.

Yudhishthira repeats his remarks.

The Raja dashes the dice at Yudhishthira and makes his nose bleed.

Uttar enters the palace and tells the true story.

whilst Arjuna stayed without; and he told his or her truly all that had taken place, and discovered to him the true names and condition of the Pándavas. When the Raja heard this he was in great alarm, and he begged pardon of Yudhishthira and entreated that he might be forgiven. And Yudhishthira answered:—"I have banished wrath and passion altogether from my mind, but had this blood of mine fallen to the ground, it would have been a great misfortune for you, and all your house, and therefore it was fortunate that Draupadí caught it in her veil." Then Yudhishthira cleansed his face and the blood ceased to flow; and Arjuna was brought in and paid his respects to the Raja; and Uttar praised him to the Raja, and acknowledged his own cowardice; and all the garments of the Kauravas, which had been taken from the Chieftains while they lay senseless upon the field of battle, were sent to the inner apartments of the palace, and divided amongst the damsels and children.

Yudhishthira forgives the Raja.

Division of the spoil.

After this Raja Viráta held a Council of all his Chieftains; and all the Pándavas were there, clothed in their royal robes, and they related all their adventures to the Raja and the Council. And the Raja paid them every mark of respect, and he pledged his word that he would assist them in recovering their Raj. And the Raja offered his daughter Uttará in marriage to Arjuna; but Arjuna answered:—"For a whole year I have been teaching this damsel, and I have been to her as a father, and she has been to me as a daughter: It is not therefore meet that I should take her as a wife; but if it please you and my elder brother Yudhishthira, let her be married to my son Abhimanyu." So Raja Viráta agreed, and he gave his daughter Uttará in marriage to the son of Arjuna; and a great marriage-feast was held; and Krishna came with his brother Balaráma, and with Subhadrá, the wife of Arjuna, and her son Abhimanyu who was to be married to Uttará; and Raja Drupada came also, with his son Dhrishta-dyumna; as well as all the Chieftains and allies of Raja Viráta. And the marriage of Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna, to Uttará, the daughter of

Raja Viráta promises in Council to assist the Pándavas in recovering their Raj.

Offers his daughter in marriage to Arjuna.

Arjuna's graceful refusal.

Marriage of Uttará, daughter of Raja Viráta, to Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna.

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART II.

Raja Viráta, was duly celebrated with every magnificence and sign of rejoicing.

Review of the foregoing legend of the thirteenth year.

The foregoing narrative of the thirteenth year of the exile of the Pándavas is no doubt a fiction so far as it refers to the Pándavas; and sufficient stress has been laid upon this point at the opening of the present chapter. But whilst the details by which the Pándavas are associated with Raja Viráta and his family are forced and artificial, the main incidents of the amour of Kíchaka with the waiting-maid of the Rání are of a natural and life-like character, and bear the impress of being the remains of some independent tradition which has been borrowed from a foreign country. Accordingly, the attempt may now be made to divide the whole narrative into two distinct parts, each of which may be considered separately in the following order:—

Separation of the amour of Kichaka from the mythical references to the Pándavas.

1st, The authentic tradition of the amour of Kíchaka.

2nd, The mythical details by which the tradition of the amour has been joined on to that of the Pándavas.

1st, Tradition of the amour of Kichaka.

The tradition of the amour of Kíchaka appears to belong to what may be called the Dark Ages of Hindú history. It contains no references whatever either to the gods of the Aryans, or to the ascendancy of the Bráhmans, or to the institution of caste, or to the doctrines of Buddha. The leading religious idea appears to have been a belief in the substantial existence of ghosts as demons capable of wreaking their wrath upon all offenders; a characteristic which is generally supposed to indicate an aboriginal people of Turanian origin. At the same time, the wealth of the country appears to have con-

Anterior to Brahmanism and Buddhism.

Religious ideas connected with ghosts.

Pastoral character of the people.

sisted of cattle and horses; a circumstance which would indicate a pastoral people. The scene, however, is chiefly laid in the palace of the Raja; and here are to be found evidences of refinement and civilization. There are the women's apartments where the Rání is attended by her maid, and where the Princess Uttará, and the other young damsels of the palace, are instructed in music and dancing by a eunuch, who wears a woman's dress and jewels. There is the Council-hall, where the Raja spends a large portion of his time in the company of his Chieftains; and there is the kitchen, where the sleepy and voracious warrior is supposed to be lording it over the under cooks, and preventing any theft or waste of victuals.

Ancient civilization. Palace of the Raja. Women's apartments. Council-hall. Kitchen.

The characters that appear in this tradition are all simple and life-like. They comprise a timid Raja and a good-natured Rání; a mighty warrior and a captivating waiting-maid; a boyish Prince and his girlish sister. The dialogue varies from the grave discourse in the Council-hall to the passionate conversation in the women's apartments, and the merry chatter of light-hearted damsels in the music and dancing-room. The plot is perfectly intelligible. A beautiful woman of noble birth enters the service of a Rání as a waiting-maid; on which the Rání's brother falls in love with her. But this natural incident, simple as it is in itself, is surrounded by a number of details so strange and significant as to demand a careful consideration.

Leading characters in the tradition of the amour. Varied dialogue. The plot.

When the Rání first engaged the waiting-maid, she was fearful lest the charms of the new attendant should attract the admiration of the Raja. But the waiting-maid explained that she was guarded by

The Rání's jealous fears respecting the waiting-maid allayed by her story of the five Gandharvas.

five invisible Gandharvas, who would wreak their wrath upon any man who should venture to approach her with improper proposals. Accordingly, the Ráni appears to have been satisfied with this explanation, and took the captivating woman into her service as waiting-maid.

Difficulty as regards the Gandharvas.

This reference to the Gandharvas is a real difficulty. It is impossible to say whether in the original tradition the Ráni believed the Gandharvas to be invisible spirits or mortal men. There is indeed much to be said on both sides. The belief that demons, or evil spirits, were prone to amours with the daughters of men is even more widely spread than the belief in the loves of the gods; and to this day is deeply implanted in the minds of Hindús and other Orientals. The mishaps of an unfortunate bridegroom are invariably ascribed to the machinations of evil spirits; whilst the mishap of a maiden, which might otherwise have excited doubts of her chastity, has been occasionally attributed to the irregular desires of a being from another world. In the present tradition, the waiting-maid is represented as being the subject of jealousy rather than of love; and in this respect her case corresponds to that of Sarah, in the Book of Tobit, whom young Tobias was afraid to marry, lest he should be strangled by her demon lover. But the story of the invisible Gandharvas is also capable of a rational interpretation. The Gandharvas, or Hill people, are traditionally regarded as a very handsome race, and the women especially were much admired by the people of the plains; and it was only at a later period, when the Aryan traditions began to assume a mythical form, that the Gandharvas were converted into divine be-

Belief in the amours of invisible demons with mortal women.

The Gandharvas, a Hill tribe, but subsequently converted into celestial beings.

ings attendant upon the gods, the men as celestial musicians, and the women as celestial dancers. Accordingly, in the original tradition, the waiting-maid may have simply explained that she was a Gandharva woman, and had five Gandharva husbands, or lovers, who would slay any one who affronted her; whilst the turn in the story, which invests the Gandharvas with a supernatural character, may only belong to the modern form of the legend.

Possibility of an earlier and a later legend.

The character of Kíchaka is well deserving of consideration. He appears to have been a type of a peculiar class, who held a certain position in the courts of Hindú Rajas. It has already been seen that Sakuni, the brother of the Rání Gándhári, dwelt at Hastinápur; and Kíchaka, the brother of the Rání of Viráta, appears to have dwelt in like manner in the city of his sister's husband. That a bride should be accompanied by her brother when about to be married to a distant Chieftain, seems to be a very natural arrangement; but it is difficult to perceive on what grounds the brother should take up his permanent residence in the city of his sister's husband. Sakuni however held no prominent position at Hastinápur; but seems to have been a mere gambler, who assisted in the intrigues of his nephews against their rivals. Kíchaka on the other hand appears to have been a man of a different stamp. He evidently possessed a strong will, and maintained a powerful influence over his weak-minded brother-in-law. He was a man of pleasure and maintained a number of women; but he is said to have been in the habit of taking his friends into his zenana; from which circumstance it might be inferred that he treated his women rather as mistresses than as wives.

Peculiar status of Kíchaka as a brother of the Rání.

Character of Kíchaka.

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART II.

The progress of Kíchaka's amour is strange and primitive throughout, and may be referred to a period of remote antiquity. Kíchaka not only falls in love with his sister's maid, but coolly asks his sister to send the maid to his house; and the Rání yields to his entreaties and despatches her maid-servant ostensibly for a cup of wine, a circumstance which seems to indicate that wine was occasionally drank by Hindú ladies in the olden time. The scuffle that ensued between Kíchaka and his fair enslaver is perfectly intelligible; but not so the fact that when the insulted woman ran into the Council-hall for protection, she was followed by her admirer and kicked in the presence of the Raja. Another singular feature in the tradition is the dialogue between the servant girl and the Raja, in which the former declares that it is very unbecoming in the Raja to allow her to be kicked in his presence, whilst the latter excuses himself from interfering, on the ground that he did not know what had passed between the pair before they entered the Hall.

Peculiar incidents in Kichaka's amour.

Wine drank by Hindú women.

Scene between Kichaka and the waiting-maid in the Council-hall.

Dialogue between the waiting-maid and the Raja.

Poetic justice in the slaughter of Kichaka.

The plot between the cook and the waiting-maid for punishing Kíchaka is in accordance with poetic justice; and more than one European tradition has been preserved in which a gallant had expected to meet a wife, and has suddenly found himself in the presence of an enraged husband. The horrible treatment of the remains of Kíchaka after death is an Oriental idea of perfect revenge; whilst the grim joy of the waiting-woman at the sight is apparently an exaggeration, intended to indicate the righteous anger of a model wife at having her chastity assailed.

Attempt to burn the waiting-maid alive.

The climax of the narrative is reached when the

brethren of Kíchaka seized the waiting-maid, and prepared to burn her upon the funeral pile with the body of the dead man. This barbarous proceeding had no connection with the later Brahmanical idea of self-sacrifice on the part of a widow in the expectation of rejoining her deceased lord. It originated rather in the desire of the nearest relatives of the dead man that he should enjoy in death the society of the woman whom he had most loved in life. In such cases the willingness or otherwise of the unfortunate victims would be wholly ignored; and their murder would be a scene too painful to contemplate. Indeed, it is almost possible to sympathize in the momentary delirium which impels a poor widow to throw herself upon the pile in the full expectation of enjoying everlasting bliss with her beloved husband in the realms of paradise. But the idea of putting an unhappy female to death, merely because she has unwittingly raised the desires of a voluptuary, is one upon which the mind can scarcely care to dwell. The distinction seems to be fully apprehended by a Hindú audience. Any interference in a Brahmanical satí would be regarded with a peculiar horror, which still finds expression in more remote districts; whilst in the present instance the sympathies are all enlisted in favour of the giant cook, who personates a Gandharva, and delivers Draupadí from the burning pile.

Distinction between the Brahmanical idea of sati, and the slaughter of a female favourite.

Interference in a Brahmanical sati regarded with horror.

In the later portions of the narrative the authentic details cannot be so plainly distinguished from those which are mythical. The invasions of Susarman and Duryodhana are almost entirely mythical; but the departure of Arjuna and Uttar in a war

Obscurity of the authentic details in the later portion of the narrative.

chariot, amidst the giggling of the damsels at seeing the eunuch in armour, and the girlish clamours for silks and cloths, forms a striking scene which may have been borrowed from some other tradition. In like manner the procession of damsels sent out by Raja Viráta to welcome the youthful conqueror is perfectly in accordance with the receptions given in ancient times to successful warriors, and calls to mind the procession of maidens who went out with timbrels and dances to welcome back the youthful David after the slaughter of Goliath of Gath, and who sang aloud:—"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."

Procession of damsels.

2nd, Mythical details connecting the tradition of the amour of Kíchaka with the story of the Pándavas.

In turning to the mythical details which connect the tradition of the amour of Kíchaka with the history of the Pándavas, it will be necessary, in the first instance, to inquire into the geographical position of the Raj of Viráta. Here, at the very outset, a difficulty presents itself of no ordinary magnitude.

Geographical difficulties.

The local traditions of two widely distant countries present almost equal claims to the country of Viráta, namely, the peninsula of Guzerat on the western side of India, and the valley of the Brahmaputra on its eastern quarter. In the Mahá Bhárata, the Raj of Viráta is called Matsya, or the country of the fish, and the city is indifferently termed Matsya or Viráta.

City of Viráta identified with the site of the modern Dholka.

The local traditions of Guzerat declare that the site of Matsya-nuggur or Viráta-pur is occupied by the modern town of Dholka, which is situated on the southern coast of the neck of the peninsula.[2]

Country of Viráta identified with Dinajpur.

The local traditions of eastern Bengal are more explicit. The district of Dinajpur is still called Matsya; and the remains of ancient forts, said to be

[2] Forbes' Ras Mala, or Hindú Annals of Guzerat, vol. i. p. 103.

those of Viráta and Kíchaka, are pointed out to this day as proofs of the truth of the tradition.[3] The whole of this region, however, would appear to have been the land of fable. Here it was that Bhíma fought against the Asuras; and it was in this same country that the sage Vyása was supernaturally born of Matsya, the fish-girl.[4] Whether, however, the Raj of Viráta is to be placed in the peninsula of Guzerat or in the region of eastern Bengal, it is in either case far too distant from the neighbourhood of Hastinápur to admit of such campaigns as those of Duryodhana and Susarman. That great and conquering armies, like those of Sesostris and Semiramis, of Alexander and Timour, have occasionally traversed vast distances, cannot be doubted, but their movements resembled the migrations of nations, and have left their impress upon the history of the world. Then, again, at a later period, the Parthian horsemen have made their way from the valley of the Indus to the city of Jerusalem; whilst almost within our own time the Mahratta cavalry have scoured the great Indian peninsula from sea to sea. But both the Parthian and Mahratta armies were composed of organized and well-trained warriors, and invaded rich and luxurious regions, from which they raised vast contributions of gold, jewels, and beautiful women. The campaigns, however, of Duryodhana and Susarman were the mere marauding forays of two bands of cattle-lifters; and the

Dinajpur anciently a land of fable.

Authenticity of the campaigns of Duryodhana and Susarman disproved.

Long marches of Sesostris, Semiramis, Alexander, and Timour.

Parthians.

Mahrattas.

Contrast between the foregoing expeditions and the cattle-lifting forays of Duryodhana and Susarman.

[3] Buchanan's Report on the district of Dinajpur, preserved in Martin's Eastern India, vol. ii. p. 609 *et seq.*

[4] In the original myth Raja Viráta is said to have been the brother of Matsya, and was preserved like her in the belly of a fish. These myths may be altogether rejected, as the depraved creations of monks, either Brâhmans or Buddhists, whose imaginations were ever turning upon women and the mysteries of reproduction.

readers of the Mahá Bhárata are called upon to believe that these petty Chieftains marched a distance of at least five or six hundred miles for the purpose of carrying away a few sheep and cows; and that, too, at a time, when the Aryan Kshatriyas appear to have had some difficulty in maintaining their outposts in the neighbourhood of Delhi.

Futile efforts of the Brahmanical compilers to associate the Pándavas with remote quarters of India.

Accordingly, the geographical notices must be regarded as another instance of the efforts of the Brahmanical compilers to associate the traditions of the Pándavas with the more remote populations of India, which can be referred in almost every instance to a mythical origin. In a word, it seems to be fully proved that every authentic tradition connected with the Raj of Bhárata refers either to the immediate neighbourhood of Hastinápur and Indra-prastha, or else must be thrown back upon some locality further to the west or north, in the direction of Cabul or Cashmere.

Mythical character of the scene in which the Pándavas first presented themselves to Raja Viráta.

The scene in which the Pándavas first present themselves to Raja Viráta is as mythical as the geography of the Raj. Their ostensible object was to conceal their real names, and yet they appear to have provoked discovery, for Yudhishthira declares that he had been a retainer of Raja Yudhishthira, whilst Bhíma asserts that he had been cook to Raja Yudhishthira.

Yudhishthira and Bhíma provoke discovery.

Modern tone of Yudhishthira's language.

Again, the language of Yudhishthira is the polished flattery of a suppliant in the court of a modern Raja; and is wholly wanting in that rude eloquence in which an ancient warrior might be expected to ask for protection.

His artificial reference to his own losses.

The bitter irony of Yudhishthira's explanation that he had been a teacher of dice, is wholly untrue to nature, and probably originated in sheer paucity of invention.

His losses at the gambling match may have indeed suggested the idea to the Brahmanical compiler, but it is altogether incredible that he should have deliberately revived the agony of that hour, without any cause or reason whatever. His assertion that he was a Bráhman is equally unintelligible, and probably originated in an abortive effort of the compilers to impart a Brahmanical tone to the legend; for the profession of gambling is scarcely compatible with that ideal of the Brahmanical caste which seems to have been generally present to the imaginations of the "arrangers."

Asserts himself to be a Bráhman and a dice-player.

The disguises of Bhíma and Arjuna are also somewhat remarkable. The traditional appetite of Bhíma seems to have suggested the idea of his serving as a cook; although there are traces of a period when a knowledge of cookery was regarded as a royal accomplishment.[5] But Arjuna's disguise is palpably mythical. By a miracle he became a eunuch for a year; and, indeed, without some such miracle, the Brahmanical compilers could scarcely have ventured to introduce him into a zenana. Considering that the Pándavas were rude warriors living in the practice of polyandry, the idea itself is a glaring anachronism; although in accordance with the manners which appear to have prevailed in the Courts of the later and more effeminate Rajas.

Mythical disguises of Bhíma and Arjuna.

Bhíma serving as cook.

Supernatural character of Arjuna's disguise as a eunuch.

The engagement of Draupadí is equally suggestive of a myth. She declared that she had been the waiting-maid of Krishna's wife, and the waiting-maid and dearest friend of Draupadí. The arrangement of her hair appears to have occasioned some

Mythical character of Draupadí's personation of a maid-servant.

Extraordinary arrangement of her hair in consequence of her vow.

[5] See hereafter the tradition of Nala and Damayantí, where Damayantí discovers her husband through his disguise by the flavour of his cookery.

difficulty to the compiler, as she had vowed that it should never be tied up again until Bhíma's fingers were dripping with the blood of Duhsásana. After remaining dishevelled during an exile of twelve years in the jungle, it is now said to have been twisted into one string like a serpent; although it is difficult to perceive in what respect this twisting differed from tying. Again, the alleged beauty of Draupadí seems to be questionable. Supposing that she was only sixteen at the time of her marriage, the twelve years of Arjuna's exile, and the twelve years of exile in the jungle, added to the intervening period when Arjuna and his brethren were engaged in conquering the surrounding Rajas, would make her a woman of forty or forty-five years of age; a stage in life at which Oriental women generally have lost every vestige of beauty. The twelve years of Arjuna's exile, and eleven of the years of the exile of the Pándavas in the jungle, may perhaps be treated as mythical; but still it is difficult to believe that the wife of five husbands, who was also the mother of five sons, should have been endowed with such irresistible charms as those which are ascribed to the maid-servant who appears in the independent tradition of Kíchaka's amour. Moreover, the manners of Draupadí appear to have been considerably refined by her long exile. Whilst in the jungle she had hospitably offered to wash the feet of Jayadratha; but when engaged as a waiting-maid in the palace, she expressly stipulated that she should not be called upon to wash the feet of any one. It will also be remembered that the waiting-maid suffered the indignity of a kick; but the Brahmanical compilers appear to have considered

Questionable beauty.

Alleged refinement of Draupadi's manners.

Myth that the Sun god preserved her from the indignity of a kick.

that such an affront would be derogatory to the memory of Draupadí. Accordingly it is said that the Sun god, to whom she had prayed for succour, sent down two invisible spirits who preserved her from the intended insult.[6]

Mythical details respecting the Pándavas.

As regards the association of the Pándavas with the story of the amour, there are many particulars introduced which serve to prove the mythical character of the connection. The statement that the teacher of dice and the head cook were sitting in Council with the Raja and his Chieftains, may be honourable to the Pándavas, but is incompatible with their position in the Raja's household. The remonstrances of Draupadí on account of the low pursuits of herself and husbands appear to be of a mythical character; and so is the reply of Bhíma in which he refers to the story of Ráma and Síta. The battle scenes are all mythical, especially Arjuna's successive combats with the different Kaurava Chieftains; but the declaration of Arjuna as he drove away from his encounter, that he would not slay a man excepting on the field of battle, and that fugitives and captives were as women in his eyes, is evidently intended to convey a moral rule which was calculated to migitate the horrors of ancient warfare. The statement that Yudhishthira, the dice-player, was left in command of the army, whilst his brothers set off in pursuit of Susarman, is simply absurd. The crowning piece of childishness is the ridiculous quarrel between Yudhishthira and the Raja, as to whether Uttar or Arjuna had defeated the Kauravas; and it is diffi-

Declaration of Arjuna as regards fugitives and captives, intended as a moral rule.

Ridiculous dispute between Yudhishthira and Raja Viráta.

[6] This incident is omitted in the traditionary account already given in the text, as it would only have distracted the attention of the reader; and indeed it is so clumsily introduced as to be really devoid of effect, for notwithstanding the divine interposition in her favour, Draupadí continued to complain of the kick.

cult to choose between the foolish conceit of the Raja and the senseless obstinacy of Yudhishthira. The idea that the honour of Yudhishthira was saved because the blood from his nose did not fall upon the ground may have had some foundation in local sentiment; although the sentiment is in itself unmeaning, and no traces of it can be found in any other tradition.

Marriage of Abhimanyu and Uttará treated as a myth.

The marriage of the son of Arjuna with the daughter of Raja Viráta is the salient point in the story of the thirteenth year, for it is the principal connecting link between Viráta and the Pándavas. The whole of the legend, however, evidently belongs to the Krishna group, and is altogether independent of the history of the Pándavas. The voluptuous love of women and wine, which finds full expression in the story of Kíchaka, especially connects that story with the worship of Krishna, whilst it is altogether foreign to the sentiments which appear in the traditionary history of the Pándavas. Again, by accepting the tradition that the Raj of Viráta is to be fixed in Guzerat, and not in eastern Bengal, all geographical difficulties in the way of associating the tradition with the history of Krishna are at once removed, for Guzerat is the especial scene of the later adventures of Krishna. But the geographical difficulties in the way of associating the tradition with the history of the Pándavas would be as insurmountable as ever; for Viráta would still be at least six hundred miles from Hastinápur; and it is incredible that negotiations for peace, and preparations for war, should be conducted at so vast an interval. Then even the fact of the marriage of the son of

Arjuna with the daughter of Viráta has a mythical aspect; for the story that Arjuna was married to Subhadrá, the sister of Krishna, who gave birth to Abhimanyu, has already been proved to be a myth; though still a myth which is peculiarly connected with the history of Krishna. Finally, from the moment of the marriage, Raja Viráta fades away and Raja Drupada becomes the important personage. It is Raja Drupada who subsequently sent his family priest as envoy to Hastinápur; and it was his son Dhrishta-dyumna who was elected to be Commander-in-Chief of the allied armies of the Pándavas. Moreover it is probable that the city of Drupada was in the immediate neighbourhood of Hastinápur; whilst it is certain that the city of Viráta was at least six hundred miles off. Accordingly it may be inferred that the negotiations and preparations were carried on from the city of Drupada; and that the whole story of the amour of Kíchaka, ending with the marriage of Abhimanyu with Uttará, is a myth connected with the history of Krishna, which has been forcibly grafted on to the history of the Pándavas.

After the marriage Viráta disappears and Drupada takes the lead.

Subsequent negotiations and preparations carried on in the city of Raja Drupada.

There is one other feature in the story which seems worthy of notice, and that is the ridicule which it appears to throw upon the popular belief in ghosts and demons, and which finds full expression in the universal alarm which prevailed after the death of Kíchaka. This fear of ghosts is general amongst the Hindús, as indeed it is amongst most nations; but the manifestation of that fear in the form of propitiating the demons by offerings, is a peculiar characteristic of some of the aboriginal races. Accord-

Ridicule thrown by the story upon the religious belief of the aborigines as regards ghosts and demons.

ingly it may be inferred that the story belongs to that phase in Bráhmanical teaching, which sought to establish a higher form of worship by ridiculing the more gloomy faith which prevailed amongst the aborigines.

CHAPTER X.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE PÁNDAVAS.

IN the negotiations which were carried on after the alleged marriage of Abhimanyu and Uttará, Krishna still plays a prominent part, although in no case does his presence seem necessary to the progress of the story; and this question, as to the real or mythical association of Krishna and the Pándavas, should be especially borne in mind whilst dealing with the remaining portion of the Mahá Bhárata. The history of the negotiations which preceded the great war may be best considered under four heads, as follows:—

Questionable character of Krishna's subsequent association with the Pándavas.

History of the negotiations which preceded the great war treated under four heads.

1st, The great Council of the Pándavas and their allies at the marriage feast of Abhimanyu and Uttará.

2nd, The embassy of the Bráhman priest of Raja Drupada to the city of Hastináp ur.

3rd, The embassy of Sanjaya, the charioteer of the Maháraja, to the city of Viráta.

4th, The final mission of Krishna to the Kauravas.

The history of the negotiations commences with the first great Council of the Pándavas, on the day after the marriage of Abhimanyu and Uttará. There are said to have been minor Councils in the city of Viráta, in which the Pándavas had publicly dis-

1st, Great Council of the Pándavas and their allies at the marriage feast of Abhimanyu and Uttará.

closed who they were, and in which the marriage itself had been discussed; but on the present occasion all the allies of the Pándavas, including their father-in-law Raja Drupada, and Krishna and Balaráma, the alleged brothers-in-law of Arjuna, are said to have been present. The traditionary account of this Council may now be related as follows:—

Traditional account of the Great Council.

Now on the morning after the marriage of the son of Arjuna with the daughter of Raja Viráta, the Pándavas and all their kinsmen who had assembled in that city to celebrate the marriage, bedecked themselves with garlands and gathered together in the Court-hall. And Rajas Viráta and Drupada took their seats; and then followed Krishna and some reverend and ancient men; and then Sátyaki, the kinsman of Krishna, and Balaráma and Yudhishthira; and then the sons of Drupada, and the brothers of Yudhishthira, and the sons of Viráta, and many others whose names need not be declared.

Speech of Krishna:—"The Pándavas have now fulfilled their period of exile and desire the restoration of their rights; but before going to war, an ambassador might be sent to the Kauravas."

And when all the Chieftains were seated, Krishna addressed the Council as follows:—"All of you know how Raja Yudhishthira lost his Raj, and was sent into the wilderness by the evil machinations of Sakuni, who challenged him to the game of dice: You know too how Yudhishthira and his brethren braved the dangers of their exile, and passed twelve years openly in the wilderness, and one year secretly in this city without being discovered; and especially how they suffered during the last year, when for the sake of concealment they became servants to Raja Viráta: Now it is for you to consider what the Pándavas should do: Yudhishthira would not commit an unfair action, even though he might thereby gain the sovereignty of Indra; and he would be satisfied with a small village provided only that he had gained it by fair means: The sons of Dhritaráshtra cannot subdue the Pándavas, but they are still trying by unfair means to exclude their kinsmen from the Raj of their father Pándu; yet the Pándavas bear no malice towards them, and rather than go to war would give up their

claim to the paternal share of the Raj of Bhárata, provided only that they regained those districts, in Khándava-prastha, which they conquered with their own hands: I pray you to consider well the insatiable ambition of the Kauravas, and the truthfulness of Yudhishthira, and the relationship that exists between them, and then say what is to be done: Two courses appear to be left open; either the Pándavas should go and slay Dhritaráshtra and his sons, or you should go and counsel Dhritaráshtra to restore to the Pándavas their rightful share of the Raj: If the Pándavas go to war, it is certain that they will come out victorious; and it therefore seems to me that we should act wisely if we sent an ambassador to counsel the Kauravas to restore half the Raj to the sons of Pándu."

Now when Krishna had spoken, his brother, Balaráma, arose and seconded his proposition. And Balaráma said:— "It is true that the Kauravas have ill-treated the Pándavas, but it would not be wise to drive them to extremity, but rather to gain our object by peaceable means: Yudhishthira may also be said to have brought his misfortunes upon himself: He knew that he was not expert at dice, and he ought to have listened to the counsel of his elders, who tried to dissuade him from continuing in the play: But he turned a deaf ear to all their words and persisted in the game: There were hundreds of players in the court of Duryodhana who were inferior to him in skill, and he could have selected one of these and defeated him with ease; but as ill fortune would have it he chose to play with Sakuni, who was the most expert of all the players, and he would not leave off until he had lost all: Now let an eloquent man be sent to Maháraja Dhritaráshtra to propose a treaty, and I doubt not that a treaty will be accepted, and this will be far better than going to war."

Speech of Balaráma:—"I agree with Krishna, especially as Yudhishthira by persisting in the game at dice is really the author of his own misfortunes."

Then Sátyaki, who was the kinsman of Krishna, arose and said:—"I am not surprised at your speech, O Balaráma, but still those who listened to your words cannot but be angry: How can you pronounce the victory of Duryodhana to be a just one, when he set an expert dice-player to

Speech of Sátyaki:—"I do not agree with Balaráma, and I propose war: The game was altogether a cheat, but still the Pándavas have fulfilled their engagement, and no Kshatriya should beg for that which is his right: Moreover, the Kauravas are as badly disposed towards them as ever."

challenge Yudhishthira, who is a mere novice at the game? Had Yudhishthira been playing with his brethren in his own house, and had Duryodhana and his party come there by chance and defeated him, then the victory and defeat would have been fair: But Yudhishthira was invited to the house of Duryodhana, and there defeated with loaded dice: At this moment however Yudhishthira has fulfilled all the obligations of his defeat; why then should he go and beg of Duryodhana and his wicked Ministers? From the day his thirteenth year of exile was fulfilled, he became entitled to his ancestral rights; why then should he ask for his share of the Raj when it is his by right? Even if he were to covet the property of other people, he is bound as a Kshatriya to take it by force of arms, and never to beg for it: Moreover, how can you attribute goodwill to the Kauravas, when, notwithstanding the Pándavas have fulfilled their engagement, they still persist in saying that the sons of Pándu were discovered within the thirteenth year; and when, notwithstanding the advice of Bhíshma and Drona, they still continue to keep Yudhishthira out of his share of the Raj? Bear you all in mind that it is no sin to slay our enemies, but that it is a great disgrace and infamy to beg from them: Consider then, I pray you, what means should be adopted to restore Yudhishthira to his share of the Raj: My counsel is to let the Kauravas come forward and give peaceful possession to Yudhishthira; and if they do not so, then let us go to war."

Speech of Raja Drupada:—"I agree with Sátyaki: The influence of Duryodhana is paramount at Hastináp ur, and the more submissive we are, the more arrogant he will become: Let us summon our allies, and be beforehand with the Kauravas."

Raja Drupada then said:—"What has been said by Sátyaki is true: Duryodhana will never restore the share of the Raj of his own accord: The doting Mahárája has become a mere tool in the hands of Duryodhana; and Bhíshma and Drona must second the Mahárája because they are poor; whilst Karna is a creature of Duryodhana, and Sakuni is an ignorant intriguer: It is therefore my opinion that the proposal of Balaráma will do no good, for Duryodhana will never be pacified by mild means; the more submissive we are the more arrogant he will prove, and will mistake mildness for want of courage: Let us therefore collect armies

and send messengers to our friends with all speed; for Duryodhana will likewise send messengers in different directions; and according to the general custom, the Rajas will side with that party whose messenger arrives first: We have many things to do, and many difficulties to encounter, so let our messengers act with promptitude, forethought, and wisdom."

Second speech of Krishna:—"I agree with Drupada, but wish to be neutral."

Krishna then spoke a second time, as follows:—"The counsel of Raja Drupada is reasonable, and if the Pándavas are wise they will follow it: But as regards my family and myself, we are equally related to the Kauravas and Pándavas; and they have ever treated us with civility and respect: We have come here to a marriage feast, and now that the feast is over, we shall be glad to return to our own homes."

"If war is inevitable, let the messengers come to me last."

Krishna then turned to Raja Drupada, and said:—"You are superior to all of us in age and wisdom; so that whatever you say regarding the welfare of the Pándavas will be acceptable to all: If Duryodhana will consent to a just treaty, very many lives will be saved: If he will not so consent, then send out your messengers, but let your messengers come to us last of all."

Breaking up of the Council.

After this the Council broke up, and Krishna and his brother Balaráma returned to their city of Dwáraká, whilst Raja Drupada despatched his own priest to Hastinápur as envoy to the Kauravas.

Review of the foregoing tradition of the Great Council.

The proceedings of the foregoing Council call for little or no remark. It was determined to send the family priest of Raja Drupada to endeavour if possible to conclude a treaty; and meantime the Pándavas summoned all their allies far and near, and made every preparation for carrying on a war. The speech of Krishna, however, demands some explanation. It was natural and appropriate to the occasion; and so far seems to militate against the hypothesis that his traditionary history is altogether independent of that of the

great war. But whilst it is admitted that on a very few occasions the introduction of Krishna may be regarded as natural and happy, yet the great mass of the details which associate him with the Pándavas bears every trace of being a series of mythical interpolations of the Brahmanical compilers who sought to deify the hero. The following account of the attempts of Duryodhana and Arjuna to win him over to their respective sides, appears to be of this mythical character, as pertaining to the worship of Krishna as a deity:—

Mythical character of the details which associate Krishna with the Pándavas.

Mythical efforts of Duryodhana and Arjuna to win over Krishna to their respective sides.

Now Krishna had declared in the Council that the Kauravas and Pándavas were equally his kinsmen, but still his aid was greatly desired by both parties. So before the family priest of Drupada had reached the city of Hastinápur, Duryodhana set out with all speed to the city of Dwáraká, to gain the ear of Krishna and win him over to his cause; and when the Pándavas heard of his journey they despatched Arjuna on a like errand. Now it so happened that Duryodhana and Arjuna arrived at Dwáraká on the same day, but Duryodhana presented himself at the palace gate before the other, and was told by the door-keeper that Krishna was asleep; and Duryodhana, in his haughtiness and pride at being the lord of Indra-prastha, as well as that of Hastinápur, entered the chamber of Krishna, and sat down at the head of the bed. Presently Arjuna arrived at the palace, but he regarded Krishna with all respect and reverence, and seated himself at Krishna's feet, with his hands clasped in a posture of submission. Now when Krishna awoke from his slumber, his eye fell upon Arjuna, and he saluted him, and asked him if all was well, and inquired the purpose of his coming. But before Arjuna could vouchsafe a reply, Duryodhana, without waiting to be spoken to, said:—"I and my brethren are preparing to make war, and desire your assistance with a large body of soldiers; and since I and Arjuna bear the same relationship to you,

Arrogance of Duryodhana in the palace of Krishna.

Humility and reverence exhibited by Arjuna.

Duryodhana remonstrates with Krishna for speaking to Arjuna first.

it is but fair for you to regard us both in the same light, and not give him the preference over me: Moreover, I have come to you first, and you need not be told that it is the rule with men of exalted rank to notice that man first who first waits upon them." Krishna replied:—"You are quite right in saying that you came here first, but if on my awaking my eye fell upon Arjuna, and I spoke to him, do not let this cause you any uneasiness, for you are both to me as my two eyes: Besides, Arjuna is young, and you are more advanced in years, and it is generally right to bring the younger men forward by a little encouragement." So Duryodhana was appeased, and recovered his good humour; and Krishna then continued to speak to both Duryodhana and Arjuna as follows:—"I will put myself alone into one scale, and all the warriors of my army into the other scale, and you are welcome to take your choice between the two: But if you take me, remember that I shall not fight, though I will give counsel." Then Arjuna held out his hands and said:—"I at once decide upon taking your single self, for whether you go with arms or without, and whether you fight or do not fight, your presence will so fortify our hearts, that it will be worth a hundred thousand armies." But Duryodhana elected to have Krishna's army in preference to Krishna's self, and thought within himself, what comparison is there between a single man and thousands of heroes. And Krishna saw what was in the mind of Duryodhana, and said:—"I make over to you all my army." So Duryodhana went to the palace of Balaráma and told him all that had taken place, saying:—"I came hither to forestall the aid of Krishna, and he has given me every satisfaction, and has appointed you, with all his forces, to abet my cause." Balaráma replied:—"While we were at the city of Matsya, I made many representations to Krishna in your behalf, and that of the Kauravas, but he would not listen to my words, and gave me no reply: Wherefore, I have no heart for this war, and shall take no part in it: You yourself know that you have wronged the Pándavas, and that it is the duty of men to do justice and right; and if you strive to fulfil

Krishna's excuses.

Offer of Krishna.

Arjuna decides to take Krishna singly.

Duryodhana elects to have Krishna's army.

Balaráma refuses to take any part in the war.

your duty, you will obtain a well-earned reputation." With these words Balaráma embraced Duryodhana, and Duryodhana took his leave, and returned with Krishna's army to his own city. Meantime Krishna expressed his great surprise that Arjuna should have chosen him after he had pledged himself not to fight; but Arjuna answered:—"Although you will not join us in the battle, yet if you will but drive my chariot I am assured of victory." So Krishna gave his promise that he would drive the chariot of Arjuna, and Arjuna returned to his brethren in great joy.

Krishna promises to drive the chariot of Arjuna in the forthcoming war.

Improbability of the legend, but religious significance of the myth.

The improbability of the foregoing story is apparent. Hastinápur is seven hundred miles from Dwáraká as the crow flies; and the whole narrative is altogether incompatible with the narrative of Krishna's final mission to the Kauravas, which will appear hereafter. But the religious significance of the myth is obvious. It teaches that the presence of Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu is of greater service to his worshippers than a thousand armies of mortal men; and the faith and reverence of Arjuna are favourably contrasted with the utter want of either faith or reverence which was exhibited by Duryodhana.

Story of Sálya, Raja of Madra, deserting the Pándavas, but engaging to drive the chariot of Karna in his combat with Arjuna.

Whilst Duryodhana was returning to Hastinápur another incident is said to have taken place, which may be very briefly indicated. Sálya, Raja of Madra, and brother of the second wife of Pándu, had set out to join the Pándavas; but he was met by Duryodhana, and induced by an artifice to side with the Kauravas. The story is obscure and of small importance, excepting that when Sálya subsequently excused himself to the Pándavas for having changed sides, he pledged himself to drive the chariot of Karna, and secretly do his best to ensure the defeat

of Karna, in the combat which appeared to be inevitable between that warrior and Arjuna.

2nd, Embassy of the family priest of Drupada to Hastinápur.

The history of the second event in the negotiations of this period, namely, the embassy of the family priest of Drupada to the Kauravas of Hastinápur, possesses considerable historical value, inasmuch as it furnishes some significant illustrations of the rude outspoken oratory of the patriarchal age, when the art of writing was apparently unknown, and letters were sent by word of mouth. The story of the embassy may be related as follows:—

Illustrative of the patriarchal period prior to the age of writing.

Tradition of the embassy sent to the Kauravas.

Now after Duryódhana had returned to Hastinápur, the Bráhman Envoy from Raja Drupada reached the city, and Mahárája Dhritaráshtra called together his Council, and duly inquired of the Bráhman respecting the health of the Pándavas and Raja Viráta, and gave suitable replies to the same inquiries which were made by the Envoy. The Bráhman then spoke to the Kauravas, and other Chieftains that were in the Council, as follows:—"An Envoy is the tongue of the party by whom he is sent; and if he fails in the discharge of his trust, and does not faithfully repeat his master's words, he is guilty of an act of treachery: Have I therefore your permission to repeat the message sent by the Pándavas?" The whole Council exclaimed:—"Speak plainly the words of the Pándavas without extenuation and without aggravation." Then the Bráhman spoke as follows:—"The Pándavas send their salutations and speak thus: 'Raja Dhritaráshtra and Raja Pándu were brothers, as all men know; why then should the sons of Dhritaráshtra inherit the whole Raj, whilst the sons of Pándu are shut out? You, Duryodhana, from the time of your childhood up to this day, have taken every opportunity to injure us: You caused false dice to be made, and then invited us to a gambling match, in which we played with you in all simplicity; and you then by foul play dispossessed us of all we had, and compelled us to wander about like vagabonds for twelve years, and then

Council summoned to receive the Bráhman.

Preliminary courtesies.

The Bráhman requests permission to repeat the words of the Pándavas.

The message sent by the Pándavas.

to keep ourselves in perfect concealment for one year longer: All these conditions are now fulfilled, and if you will restore us to our rightful share of the Raj, we are ready to forget all the sufferings and wrongs we have endured; but if you reject our rightful claims, the blood of all the slain will be upon your head; and rest assured that Arjuna alone will devour your armies as a fowl devours the grain.'"

Demand for the restoration of the half of the Raj.

Reply of Bhishma.

Bhíshma then took up the discourse, and thus spoke to the Bráhman:—"All that you have said appears to be just and reasonable, but in boasting of the valour of Arjuna you have said too much: Arjuna may, and perchance does, deserve all the praises you have bestowed upon him, but I warn you not to repeat them in our presence."

Karna's wrathful remonstrances with Bhishma for praising Arjuna.

Karna then spoke out in great wrath, and said:—"This Envoy has right on his side when he magnifies the pretensions of those who sent him; but what has come to you, O Bhíshma, that you should bestow such praises upon Arjuna, and make common cause with him? As for the Pándavas they can only sue for peace; for after wandering twelve years in the jungle without power and without followers, what else can they do? And if they have endured hardships and vexations, can they reproach us for what they lost by gambling, when they brought all their sufferings upon themselves? And now that they pretend by means of the power of Raja Drupada and Raja Viráta to take from us the half of the Raj, let them know that Raja Duryodhana will make a free gift of all his Raj, even to his enemy, provided that enemy has a right to it; but that he will not yield up a foot of land to those who have no claim to it, how much soever he may be threatened: And now what imbecility have the Pándavas discovered in our management of affairs that they should fly so high in their pretensions?"

"The Pándavas have only themselves to blame for their losses by gambling."

Karna's message to the Pándavas:—"The Pándavas were discovered before the thirteenth year was over, and must go again into exile."

Karna then turned round to the Envoy, and said:—"Go you and say to the Pándavas:—'Whereas you were seen and recognized in the thirteenth year, and thereby broke the conditions agreed upon between us, go now and again wander in the jungle for twelve years more, and conceal yourselves for the thirteenth year, and then come hither and

appear before Raja Duryodhana, and humbly and submissively entreat him to give you the half of the Raj, and there will then be no unwillingness or delay upon his side in acceding to your prayer: You come forward now in the name of uprightness; why then do you strive to excite a war by your own bad faith and breach of engagement, and talk as if we were the promise-breakers and unjust party? If you go to war with us you will surely have cause to repent.'"

Bhíshma threatens that Arjuna will conquer Karna.

Bhíshma then replied to the words of Karna, as follows:—"On that day when you and the other warriors had driven off the cattle of Raja Viráta, and Arjuna came and defeated you, why did you not then give utterance to all these boastings? Let me, however, whisper in your ear that Arjuna is the same now as then, and if the quarrel breaks out again, Arjuna will trample down all your glory into the dust, and turn day into night in your eyes."

The Maháraja tries to appease Bhíshma and Karna, and declares in favour of peace.

Here the blind Maháraja excused Karna to Bhíshma, and said to Bhíshma:—"Karna is as a son to you, and is very young, and does not understand all the niceties of expression; so be not offended with him." And the Mahárája turned to Karna, and said:—"Bhísma is a most humane and friendly man, and all that he says is intended for our good and advantage: Why, then, do you revile Arjuna and the other Pándavas, and fall foul of Bhíshma at every turn? As regards the propositions of peace which the Pándavas have offered, Bhíshma looks upon them with a favourable eye, and I also am no less satisfied with them."

The Maháraja sends an embassy to the Pándavas.

Then the Maháraja, by and with the consent of his Council, sent Sanjaya, who was both his Minister and Charioteer, on an embassy to the Pándavas, accompanied by the family priest of Raja Drupada.

Review of the foregoing tradition of the embassy of the family priest of Drupada to the Kauravas.

The foregoing tradition of the embassy of the Bráhman priest to Hastinápur seems to furnish some insight into the primitive forms of diplomacy which were observed in patriarchal times. Although the question to be decided was one of peace or war, the preliminary courtesies were duly observed of inter-

changing inquiries respecting the health and well-being of the respective parties. The Envoy then requested permission to repeat the message as he had received it from those who had sent him; and this may have been a wise precaution, as it tended to avert from himself the wrath which might have fallen upon him as the utterer of hostile and opprobrious language. The quarrel between the patriarchal Bhíshma and the upstart Karna is not very intelligible; but it subsequently found full expression at the election of a Commander-in-Chief at the breaking out of the great war. The reference to the thirteenth year seems to indicate that the Kauravas were of opinion that the Pándavas had not fulfilled the engagement into which they had entered at the gambling match. The point, however, was never settled, and therefore calls for no further remark.

3rd, Embassy of Sanjaya to the Pándavas.

The third stage in the history of the negotiations now remains for consideration, namely, the embassy of Sanjaya, the Minister and Charioteer of the Maháraja, to the Pándavas. The proceedings of this embassy are highly significant. Sanjaya is evidently the type of an ancient diplomatist. His object was to induce the Pándavas to return to Hastinápur, without giving them any distinct pledge that their Raj would be restored to them. The history of his mission may be related as follows:—

Traditional account of the embassy.

Diplomatic qualifications of Sanjaya.

Now Sanjaya was the Charioteer and Minister of Maháraja Dhritaráshtra, and he was almost without an equal in understanding, and in knowledge, and in diplomacy, and he had everywhere very many friends and acquaintances. And the Maháraja said to Sanjaya:—"I hear that the Pándavas are in the Raj of Viráta: So go to them, and first salute

them all from us, and greet each one of them as my most beloved son, and then deliver to them all our message as follows:—"Dhritaráshtra and the elders of the Kauravas speak thus:—'You five brothers are of such good account for your commendable qualities and amiable manners, that every friend and every enemy is alike loud in exalting you; and you have now tasted both the pains and the pleasures of the world, and experienced the realities of evil, as well as those of good: It is our wish that all quarrels and discussions between kinsmen should cease, and that perfect peace should be established between the Kauravas and you; and however harsh Duryodhana, and Karna, and the younger Kauravas may appear to you, and however much they may display the pride and strength of youth, and seem to prefer the chances of war, yet if you will come before me I will settle peace between you: Except the vicious Duryodhana, and the narrow-minded Karna, no one on our side is at heart against the Pándavas.'"

Message of the Maháraja to the Pándavas.

So Sanjaya and the Bráhman, who was family priest of Raja Drupada, proceeded together to the city where the Pándavas were dwelling; and when they arrived there they found armies encamped upon the plains, and in the jungle, and on the mountains, and on the banks of rivers, as numerous as the waves of the sea. And Sanjaya was stricken with wonder at beholding all this military pomp arrayed on the side of the Pándavas; and he went on to the Council house of Raja Yudhishthira, and paid his respects in due form. And Raja Yudhishthira and all the assembly rejoiced at the arrival of Sanjaya, and returned him all suitable compliments, and inquired after their friends and kinsmen; to which Sanjaya gave appropriate replies. Raja Yudhishthira then said to Sanjaya:—"Krishna, and Raja Viráta, and Raja Drupada, and other Rajas are here present, so do you now declare your message." Sanjaya then delivered the message which had been intrusted to him by the Maháraja, and he also said:—"Among all people there is entire confidence in both the Kauravas and the Pándavas, and it is a shame to both that there should be any dissensions between

Sanjaya reaches the camp of the Pándavas, and is surprised at the greatness of their preparations for war.

The Pándavas receive the ambassador in Council.

Sanjaya delivers his message.

them, when all the world would rejoice to see them mutually serviceable to each other: Now that all the principal Rajas are gathered together, they should so act as to put an end to discord."

Reply of Yudhishthira:—"We are anxious to avoid a war, but the Maháraja is trying to entrap us to Hastinápur with mere offers of protection, without promising to restore our share of the Raj."

Raja Yudhishthira then replied to the Envoy as follows:—"Whosoever is wise will never give his consent to a war on any trivial grounds, nor suffer so many souls to be slain, and the whole Raj thrown into confusion, without absolute necessity, especially when both parties are friends and kinsmen: But when peace cannot be attained, and war seems inevitable, it would be useless in us to humiliate ourselves to the dust for the sake of concord: We are disinclined to war, but it is out of sympathy for our own people; and because the Raj would be of little profit or comfort to us after the slaughter of our friends and kinsmen: He, however, who is intent upon a war of malice is always in a fever, and the fever burns stronger and stronger in his heart day by day, until he can feel no pleasure in the ordinary gratifications of the world: Now we know not what offence we have given to Karna, that he should ever be on the alert for our death and perdition, and ever be speaking evil of us to Duryodhana, and kindling a fire in his own mind against us: As for Dhritaráshtra, we acknowledge him to be our Maháraja, and we know that he is kind and benevolent, and averse to doing evil and working mischief: But for the sake of humouring his son Duryodhana, and keeping on good terms with him, the Maháraja stoops to act deceitfully towards us, and would entrap us into his presence by mere offers of protection: Then, again, Vidura is the general well-wisher, and earnest for our good; but however much advice he may give, it is all thrown away, both upon Duryodhana and his doting father Dhritaráshtra, though he speak the truth ever so clearly."

Reply of Krishna:—"The Pándavas have been put to such expenses in preparing for this war, that they have no alternative but to demand their half share of the Raj."

Krishna then spoke thus to Sanjaya:—"I am equally desirous for the welfare of both the Kauravas and Pándavas; but what can I do when the Maháraja prefers the immediate gratification of his son to all other considerations? Yudhishthira and his brethren have always expressed a desire

for a treaty of peace, but no such offer ever came from Dhritaráshtra or the Kauravas; so this war which is inevitable is brought about by the Kauravas and not by the Pándavas: And whereas the Pándavas have very large armies collected in their behalf, and have no means of providing for them now that they are assembled, except by asking for half the Raj from the Kauravas, it is necessary that they should get possession of the country by peace or by war, according to the proverb that the hungry man will throw himself at the lion: And although the Kauravas have been guilty of the worst treachery against the Pándavas, and have offered the most abominable insults to Draupadí, nevertheless if they are now ashamed of what they have done, and are willing to make amends for the past, as yet it is not too late; and albeit the Pándavas are much estranged from them and wish to be revenged, yet they will not go from what I say: Go now and tell this to the Kauravas, and bid them prepare for that course which they prefer; for war if they are inclined to war, and for peace if they are inclined to peace."

Yudhishthira sends public messages by Sanjaya to the elders at Hastinápur.

Then the Envoy Sanjaya took his leave of Krishna, and he went to Yudhishthira; and Yudhishthira said to him:— "Carry to the Kauravas all the message you have received from Krishna without any alteration; and salute my old tutors, Drona and Aswattháma, and remind them of old times; and go to the houses of Bhíshma, Vidura, and the Maháraja, and pay them similar compliments; and go also to each one of my kinsmen and friends, and to each of the Rajas who have come to their assistance, and lifting the hand of obeisance to your head, kiss the feet of each one of them."

Yudhishthira's secret message to Duryodhana:—"We will resign our claim to the half share if you will restore us our five villages in Khándava-prastha."

Yudhishthira then gave many rich and rare gifts to Sanjaya, both for himself and for the most worthy of his old friends; and when the Envoy was about to return, Yudhishthira took him aside, and whispered to him as follows:— "These are my last words, which you must tell Duryodhana, to induce him to cast aside his evil opinions and to lean towards justice: We will give up to him the whole of the Raj, provided we may retain the five districts, which are our

own settlements:[1] And we five brothers, for the sake of peace, will be content with this small portion, and will be on good terms with Duryodhana: The desire of my heart is that there should be no war, and that I and my brethren should live once more in peace and happiness together, and be reconciled to all our kinsmen; and that our relatives who have come here to assist us may go back uninjured: But I am prepared for both war and peace, and I can be either hostile or friendly, according as events may transpire."

Sanjaya delivers his messages to the Maháraja.

Sanjaya having been thus instructed by Yudhishthira returned to the city of Hastinápur, and arrived at the palace of the Maháraja and made known his coming. And the Maháraja sent for him to a private apartment, and heard all that the Pándavas had said, and then dismissed him and sent his door-keeper to call Vidura; and that whole night the Maháraja and Vidura passed in deep discourse by themselves upon the tidings brought by Sanjaya. And when it was morning the Maháraja summoned all his sons and kinsmen to Council, and despatched a messenger to bring Sanjaya, who thereupon entered the Council-hall and spoke as follows:—"Raja Yudhishthira sends respectful greeting to all the elders, and a friendly embrace to all the young men, and his blessing to the striplings and children." Sanjaya then delivered the message of Krishna, and the private message from Yudhishthira; and a great discussion arose in which the elders counselled peace and the younger men clamoured for war: and seeing that it was impossible that they could come to an agreement, no reply whatever was despatched to the Pándavas.

Anxious conversation throughout the night between the Maháraja and Vidura.

The Kauravas summoned to a Council, at which Sanjaya delivers his messages.

Agreement impossible.

4th, Mission of Krishna to the Kauravas.

The fourth and final stage in the history of the negotiations now remains for consideration, namely, the mission of Krishna to Hastinápur. The whole of this portion of the narrative appears to be myth-

[1] The names of the districts are given in the original, but it is difficult to say how far they are mythical. Probably they referred to five farms or gardens in the country of Khándava-prastha, but the name of one of these districts is Váranávata, which is the modern Alláhabád; and the mythical character of the references to this city has already been shown in the story of the alleged plot of the Kauravas to burn the house in which the Pándavas were residing.

ical; but yet it possesses much historical value, inasmuch as it illustrates to a remarkable degree the spirit in which the Mahá Bhárata was composed, and the conception which the Brahmanical compilers had formed of Krishna, as a mediator as well as of an incarnation of the Supreme Being. The legend may be related as follows:—

Legend of the mission.

Now when many days had passed away, and the Pándavas received no reply to the messages they had sent by Sanjaya, Yudhishthira went to Krishna, and said:—"What are we to do? I have solicited the Kauravas for peace, and would have been content if they had spared us our five villages; but they have sent us no reply to our messages; and now I am in great want, and cannot relieve the distress of my mother and brethren." And Krishna said that he would go himself on an embassy to the Maháraja, and Yudhishthira entreated him to bring about a peace; but Draupadí came in and threw herself at the feet of Krishna and said:—"Yudhishthira has sent too many supplications to the Kauravas, and has asked for only five villages, as though the right were on their side: But if you are to arbitrate between them, I pray you to remember that an arbitrator must not speak of inferiority; and if the Kauravas will make war upon the Pándavas, my five husbands, and my father and brethren, and many others, will enter the lists against them: Remember how the Kauravas treated me from the very first; how they seized me by the hair and dragged me to the ground, in the midst of the assembly." So saying, Draupadí burst into tears, and Krishna's heart melted within him, and he kindly said to her:—"Why do you weep? The time has nearly come when the Kauravas will be slain, both small and great, and when their wives will weep as you are doing now."

Yudhishthira applies to Krishna for counsel.

Krishna offers to go as ambassador to Hastinápur.

Yudhishthira's desire for peace.

Remonstrances of Draupadí.

Krishna comforts Draupadí.

After this Krishna selected a prosperous moment in the month Kartika for setting out on his mission to Hastinápur; and having bathed and worshipped the sun and fire, he went his way. And Yudhishthira and his brethren, and Rajas

Krishna proceeds to Hastinápur.

Viráta and Drupada, and many others, accompanied Krishna some distance on his way; and when they took leave of him, Yudhishthira and his brethren especially entreated that he would comfort their mother, Kuntí, who was still residing in the house of Vidura. Krishna then proceeded on his journey, until he came to a spot nigh unto the city of Hastinápur; and he halted there, and sent on messengers to announce his arrival to the Kauravas, and to say that he would be with them on the morrow. When Vidura heard the words of the messengers, he took them with him into the presence of Duryodhana, and said:—"In all the streets and market-places there is a great stir amongst high and low; all saying that Krishna is come hither on an embassy from the Pándavas: You ought therefore to assemble all your brethren and Chieftains, and go forth to meet him, so that you may conciliate him by your respect, and have the applause of all the people." Then Duryodhana called together all his Chieftains and Ministers, and caused handsome carpets to be spread for Krishna to walk upon, and ordered all the handsomest of his servants to put on festival garments and to wait upon Krishna with sandal wood and perfumes; and he sent word to his father, the Maháraja, that Krishna was coming; and Dhritaráshtra ordered that every mark of honour should be observed in the reception of such an illustrious guest. Then Duryodhana prepared to go out with all his brethren and children to meet Krishna on foot; and orders were proclaimed throughout the city that all the women of the inner apartments, who desired to see Krishna, should be permitted to behold him from the walls and tops of houses; and all the shopkeepers decorated their shops and put on festival garments; and the palace of Duhsásana, which was the best in Hastinápur, was set apart for the lodging of Krishna.

Sends on messengers to announce his arrival.

Vidura counsels Duryodhana to give Krishna a grand reception.

Great preparations commenced by Duryodhana.

Then Vidura praised Duryodhana for the preparations which he had made to do honour to Krishna. And Vidura said:—"This magnificent reception however is of small moment unless you are prepared to restore the five villages to the Pándavas." And Duryodhana replied:—"I will not

Vidura urges that the reception is useless unless Duryodhana is prepared to restore the five villages to the Pándavas.

give to the Pándavas as much land as could be carried on the head of a pin, unless I am compelled by war; and if Krishna is only come to further the claim of the Pándavas, we need not throw away our effects for naught, but receive him as an ordinary ambassador; for otherwise he will say that the Kauravas are terrified and trying to propitiate me: Moreover, if the Pándavas are thus dependent upon Krishna, let us keep him here in close custody; and by so doing clip the wings of our enemies." But the Maháraja cried out:— "Beware how you give way to such evil thoughts, for it would be a lasting disgrace to any Raja to put an ambassador into custody, and especially an ambassador so illustrious as Krishna." And Bhíshma turned to the Maháraja, and said:—"This son of yours appears to think of nothing but war and mischief; and I fear that his ruin is not far off, and that his disgrace will fall upon all of us." So saying Bhíshma rose up and went to his own house; and Vidura was much disturbed, and he rose up in like manner and went out with Bhíshma.

Duryodhana abandons his preparations and proposes putting Krishna into custody.

Remonstrances of the Maháraja.

Wrath of Bhíshma.

When it was morning Krishna bathed himself, and performed his religious duty, and then set out for the city of Hastinápur. And when he came nigh to the city, all the Kauravas, small and great, save Duryodhana only, went forth on foot to meet him; and all the men and women, young and old, came out of their apartments to see Krishna and pay him reverence. And Krishna spoke to every one with civility, and when he came to the palace of the Maháraja he sat down for a while; and presently Duryodhana came up, and barely noticed Krishna, and Krishna knew what was passing in the mind of Duryodhana from the haughtiness of his manner, and because of his not having been present with the others to meet him without the city. So after a while Krishna left the palace of the Maháraja and went to the house of Vidura; and Vidura made many particular inquiries of him respecting the Pándavas; and when Krishna had answered every question, he went into the inner apartments, and saw his father's sister Kuntí, and took her in his arms, whilst she burst into tears, for her

Krishna enters the city, and is received by all the Kauravas excepting Duryodhana.

Haughtiness of Duryodhana towards Krishna.

Krishna resides in the house of Vidura, where Kuntí is dwelling.

Affecting interview with Kuntí.

heart was yearning towards her sons the Pándavas. And Kuntí said:—"It is now fourteen years since my sons left me bathed in tears, and I have heard of all the distresses they have gone through: Tell me now if all is well with them, and what has become of Draupadí; and how she has borne up under poverty and exile: And who shall tell of my own wretchedness, for from the time of my birth until this hour I have not passed a single day in comfort; and when I had hoped to get some solace from my sons, they have been driven away from jungle to jungle, and from village to village, whilst I have been left alone amongst this tribe of Kauravas, without any respite from their wickedness and obstinacy."

Krishna comforts Kuntí with the assurance that her sons will conquer.

Then Krishna comforted Kuntí, and he secretly said to her:—"Be of good cheer! Wherever your sons have been they have overthrown their enemies, and gained many friends; and the day of their prosperity is very near, when they shall overthrow the Kauravas, and recover possession of their own Raj."

Krishna's visit to Duryodhana.

When Krishna had comforted Kuntí, he went to the palace of Duryodhana, and it was very splendid, and contained everything that was conducive to luxury and pleasure. And Duryodhana was seated upon his throne in all the pride and wealth of a great Raja, and took but small notice of Krishna. But a golden seat had been prepared for Krishna, and Duryodhana presently ordered a quantity of fruits and perfumes and much betel to be brought in; after which there was a great entertainment of victuals and liquors, but Krishna would not taste a single morsel. And Duryodhana asked him why he had no relish for such things, and Krishna answered:—"If a man enters the house of another, and partakes of his meal, there is either friendly discourse between the host and his guest, or else a needy guest is under the influence of his host: But there are no such relations between you and me; for I am on no terms of friendship with you, nor am I a needy guest who wants a meal."

Refuses to partake of the entertainment prepared by Duryodhana.

Declares that there can be no friendship between them unless Duryodhana comes to terms with the Pándavas.

Duryodhana said:—"You may not be in want of a feast, but why have you no friendship for me?" Krishna replied:—"There can be no friendship between us unless

you come to terms with the Pándavas: Besides, an ambassador may not take a meal in the house of him to whom he is sent, unless he has completed his business to his own satisfaction: Moreover, it seems to me that you must have some bad motive in insisting upon my taking food here; so I am resolved to eat nothing in your house, but to go to the house of Vidura, and there take what I think best." So saying, Krishna arose and went to the house of Vidura, followed by Bhíshma, Drona, Kripa, and many others, who severally requested him to come to their houses, saying:—"Since you have left the house of Duryodhana, you can have no objection to come to us." But Krishna excused himself, saying:—"If I visit any one of you, another may be offended, and I am satisfied with all of you; so it will be better that I go at once to the house of Vidura." And Krishna did as he had said, and Vidura entertained him with all due respect and honour.

Returns to the house of Vidura, and declines all other invitations.

And Vidura said to Krishna:—"You should not have troubled to come to Hastinápur: Duryodhana is ever proud and obstinate, but now his arrogance will be at the highest pitch at the thought that Krishna has come to wait upon him; and he is a man of that haughtiness that he cannot conceive that any one should pretend to advise him, but considers that all he says should pass for law which no man should dispute." Krishna replied:—"What you say is very true, but I desired to see with my own eyes, and I hoped that the tie of relationship would have enabled me to preserve the Kauravas from destruction: I am convinced now that their downfall is at hand, yet I will once more give my advice in the presence of them all in Council, and then if they will listen to me it will be well, but if they are deaf to my words, they must take their own course."

Vidura's objections to Krishna's visit to Hastinápur.

Krishna's explanations.

The next morning when Krishna had bathed, and worshipped the sun, all the Bráhmans and eulogists that were in the city of Hastinápur came to his door with blessings and praises, and he rewarded them all with handsome gifts. Presently all the Chieftains in the city came to wait upon him, and last of all came Duryodhana, Karna, and Sakuni.

Reverence paid to Krishna by the people of Hastinápur.

Krishna proceeds to the great Council of the Kauravas.

Krishna then called for his own chariot, and proceeded to the Council hall of the Mahárája; and Duryodhana, and Sakuni, and all the other Chieftains, proceeded in like manner to the hall. And the Mahárája and Bhíshma had already taken their seats in the hall, but they advanced a considerable distance to give Krishna a meeting. And

His reception by the Mahárája and Bhishma.

Krishna, and Dhritaráshtra, and Bhíshma, and Duryodhana seated themselves upon carpets of gold, which had been specially prepared for them in the centre of the hall; and all the other Chieftains took their seats upon the ground around them according to their respective ranks and stations.

Nárada and the Rishis appear in the sky and are provided with seats in the Council.

Meanwhile, Nárada the sage, and many other Bráhman sages, made their appearance in the sky; and Krishna said to Bhíshma:—"Behold the Rishis are appearing in the sky, and have come to attend this Council." And Bhíshma arose with all respect, and invited the Rishis to enter; and when Nárada and the rest entered the Council, all who were present arose and paid them reverence, and gave them seats which were suited to their dignity.[2]

Speech of Krishna to the Mahárája:—"I have come to reconcile the Pándavas with the Kauravas.

Then Krishna arose on his feet, and addressed Mahárája Dhritaráshtra before the whole Council, as follows:—"I have come hither, O Mahárája, for the purpose of bringing about a reconciliation between the Pándavas and the Kauravas, and thus saving the lives of very many heroes who are sure to be slain if a war break out: The family of Bhárata has ever been famous for mercy, sincerity, forgiveness, and truth; and it would be an evil thing should they commit an act of injustice whilst you are Mahárája: But your sons, since you have been their head and ruler, have been guilty of wicked deeds before your very face: they are covetous, unruly, and vicious, and break every law of morality and religion; and now they are about to commit a great crime against their nearest kinsmen: You are, I

"The house of Bhárata have been just hitherto, but the Kauravas have committed great wickedness.

"A terrible war is inevitable unless you prevent it.

[2] These mythical sages subsequently interrupt the proceedings by relating interminable myths tending to prove that Duryodhana ought to yield what is demanded of him, because Krishna and Arjuna were in reality Nárá and Náráyan, or, in other words, were incarnations of Vishnu.

believe aware that a terrible war is about to break out in your family; and should you give your sanction to that war it will destroy the whole earth; whereas you can prevent it if you please, and I think it will not be difficult to settle all matters of dispute between the parties: Let your sons act in accordance with the advice of your own Council, and you will find it will be productive of good to both parties: Cast aside all thought of gaining anything by war and enmity, and exert yourself to conclude a treaty of reconciliation and peace; for you could never conquer the Pándavas were you a hundred times more powerful than you are: O Maháraja, you have the Kauravas for your supporters, and if you pleased you might bring over the Pándavas also; and once protected by the Pándavas, not even Indra and all his host of gods could prove a match for you; and the Rajas who are now your equals, and those who are now your superiors, would be anxious to cultivate your friendship, and you would rule the whole earth, in company with your sons and grandsons and all your kinsmen; and all the conquests of the Pándavas would be yours; O Maháraja, war is all destroying! Consider whether the loss of either will be the more hurtful to you, and whether the defeat of either your sons or your nephews will give you any pleasure, since both are alike in your eyes: All the Pándavas are great heroes, and well armed; and all, with the exception of the virtuous Yudhishthira, are eager for war; they are your kinsmen, and it is your duty to protect them from every evil; then do not permit this family war, in which the Pándavas and the Kauravas will mutually kill each other, and in which nearly all the Rajas of the earth will be fighting on one side or the other, and the number of the slain will be fearful to behold: O Maháraja, it is your duty to preserve your subjects; then do not hasten their death by giving your countenance to this war, but save alike the Kauravas and the Pándavas from this imminent peril: Let the Rajas here assembled cast aside their enmity to the Pándavas, and eat and drink together, and depart as friends; and do you now show the same kindness to the Pándavas as you did in

"A reconciliation would give you the support of the Pándavas and render you invincible."

"A war would prove most destructive to all parties."

"Let the Kauravas cast aside their enmity and celebrate a great feast in honour of their reconciliation."

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former times: The Pándavas lost their father in their infancy, and you brought them up as your own sons; then as you cherish them now, and not make a sacrifice of virtue by rejecting this counsel.

Krishna addresses the Maháraja as the mouth-piece of the Pándavas, who pray for a restoration of their share of the Raj.

"What I have hitherto said to you has been of my own accord, but as the mouth-piece of the Pándavas I now speak to you thus:—'We, the Pándavas, greet you, and look upon you as our father, and now in like manner do you regard us as your sons: In obedience to your command we have passed twelve miserable years in the wilderness and one year in disguise; and all the Bráhmans in your Court know that we have faithfully passed through the ordeal, and stand now freed from all our promises: O Maháraja, do you now so act that we may regain the share of the Raj to which we are entitled: It is for you to decide whether it is us, or the Kauravas, who are in the wrong.'"

Speech of Krishna to the Council generally:—"A Minister is responsible for the acts of the Maháraja, and counsellors are bound to prevent the Maháraja from doing wrong."

Krishna then turned to the whole Council, and said:—"To the Rajas and Chieftains here assembled, I am directed by the Pándavas to speak as follows:—'It is an evil thing that an act of injustice should be committed by a Maháraja, who is assisted by such virtuous Counsellors and Ministers: A Minister is responsible for the acts of the Maháraja; and it is the duty of all good and wise Counsellors to prevent the Maháraja from performing any vicious deed: Never fear speaking the truth even if unpalatable, and never fear offending the Maháraja by telling him that he is in the wrong: Do you now advise him what course he should pursue on the present occasion.'"

Krishna's final request to the Maháraja.

Krishna then turned to the Maháraja, and said:—"O Maháraja, I as an Ambassador can say no more: I have done my duty by asking you for the share of the Raj to which the Pándavas are entitled, and by counselling you to conclude a treaty: Let your Counsellors advise you upon the matter, and if you consider my advice to be just and virtuous, do you act accordingly, and save all these Rajas and Chieftains here assembled from the grasp of death: O Chief of the race of Bhárata, be pacified and do not give way to wrath! Give the Pándavas their ancestral share of

the Raj, and rule the remainder in peace and tranquillity with your sons and grandsons: As for the Pándavas they are equally prepared, whether it be for peace or whether it be for war."

Reply of the Maháraja that Krishna had better counsel Duryodhana.

When Krishna had finished, the Maháraja replied to him, as follows:—"All that you have said is true and pleasant to hear; but I am not free, and consequently I cannot perform what I wish: Seek therefore to counsel Duryodhana rather than me; for he is violent and disobedient, and refuses to listen to the advice of his mother Gándhárí, or to the pious Vidura, or to the wise Bhíshma; and if you can move my wicked son, you will be acting like a friend, and I shall be greatly obliged to you."

Advice of Krishna to Duryodhana.

Then Krishna turned to Duryodhana, and gave the same counsel to him as he had given to the Maháraja. But Duryodhana was obstinate and said nothing, and Bhíshma spoke to him thus:—"O Duryodhana, do you follow the advice of Krishna; it will be good for you both in this world and in the next, and if you act otherwise there will be no peace, but all-destroying war: You are wicked, vicious, cowardly, and the pest of the family of Kauravas: You glory in violating the commands of your father, and in despising the counsels of Krishna and Vidura: It is on account of your tyrannical conduct that your father suffers so much misery, and is about to lose his Raj: Your pride will cost the lives of all your friends, brethren, and kinsmen: But be advised, my child, and do not make your parents wretched for ever."

Strong remonstrances of Bhíshma.

Exasperation of Duryodhana.

When Duryodhana heard these words of Bhíshma, he was exceedingly wroth, and began to breathe very hard; and Drona went up to him, and said:—"All that Krishna and Bhíshma have said to you is for your own good, and I pray you to follow their counsel, for they are wise, intelligent, experienced, and virtuous: Indeed all who dissuade you from this war are your true friends, and those who counsel you to it are your worst enemies, who will most assuredly forsake you in the hour of peril, and leave you to bear the whole brunt of the contest: But I perceive that

Remonstrances of Drona.

my words are very unpalatable, and that you are not in a condition to receive good counsel: You are puffed up with hopes of victory, and your mind is filled with visions of future conquests; but you ought to know the difficulties and dangers of the war, and to weigh both sides well, and then to decide upon the course you should pursue."

Remonstrances of Vidura.

When Drona had finished his speech, Vidurá arose and said:—"What has been advised is the best for the people of this Raj: For you, Duryodhana, I care not; excepting that if you are defeated, the Maháraja and the Rání will become beggars in the house of the Pándavas."

Powerful speech of Bhishma.

Then Bhíshma again spoke, and said:—"Arjuna and Krishna have not armed themselves as yet: The bow Gándíva[3] has not as yet been strung for the affray: The homa, which Dhaumya the priest will offer on the eve of battle, has not as yet been given to the fire: The mighty Yudhishthira, ever diffident, has not as yet looked upon your army with an angry eye: Arjuna and Bhíma have not as yet appeared at the head of their respective squadrons; nor has the giant Bhíma begun as yet to whirl his mace on high, scattering the heads of his foes on every side: The swift Nákula and Sahadeva, the experienced Dhrishta-dyumna, Viráta, and Drupada, and all the other allies of the Pándavas, have not as yet girded on their armour for the battle: The blood of thousands has not as yet been shed upon the plain, nor is the earth covered with the heads of the slain: Your well-dressed army has not as yet been exposed to the thrusts and shafts of the enemy: There is yet time to prevent these horrible calamities before it is too late: Go, then, and bow down at the feet of Yudhishthira, the chief amongst the Rajas, and let him behold you with a friendly countenance, and throw his right arm upon your neck as a mark of reconciliation, and strike you on the back as a reclaimed brother: Let the lofty-shouldered, long-armed Bhíma greet

[3] Gándíva was the mythical bow which belonged to the god Varuna, and which Agní gave to Arjuna before the burning of the jungle of Khándava, to enable him to fight against Indra. This speech attributed to Bhíshmá is mythical throughout, but, as already indicated, the whole narrative of the mission of Krishna is evidently the product of the Brahmanical compilers.

you in peace; and let Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva see you as their friend: Let this host of Rajas and Chieftains assembled here shed tears of joy at your reconciliation; proclaim the glad tidings throughout the city; and abandoning your evil thoughts for ever, rule the whole earth in conjunction with the Pándavas."

Duryodhana's indignant speech to Krishna.

At these words, Duryodhana arose in a fury, and he turned to Krishna, and said:—"I cannot tell why you give the Pándavas so much preference over me: We and they are just as nearly related to you, nor have I behaved to you otherwise than as a kinsman, nor omitted any form of respect towards you; and I cannot divine why you treat me thus: The Pándavas came of their own accord and engaged with Sakuni in a game at dice: They lost their Raj through their own folly, and now we are blamed for it: They lost all their wealth in that game, and still we are charged with having robbed them of everything: With what face do these Pándavas now come and act thus inimically towards us? What have we done that they should treat us thus? We are not to be frightened by speeches or counsel, and I will not be forced to bow down even to Indra: I see no Kshatriya now who can conquer us: As to your commendations of the Pándavas, and desire that I should regard them as objects of alarm, I must say that an army which has in it such men as Bhíshma, and Drona, and Kripa, and Karna, and Aswatthámа, cannot be overpowered by all the heroes in the earth, and devotees in the heavens: What then are the beggarly Pándavas that you should think to frighten me with them? Never will I stoop and humble myself to the Pándavas, say what you will."

Krishna rebukes Duryodhana.

Krishna then smiled, and said to Duryodhana:—"Notwithstanding all my earnest endeavours to prevent this breach between you and the Pándavas, you are resolved not to throw aside your obstinacy; and Duhsásana and Karna continue to back you up, though I know not what enmity they can have against you: Your desire to die on the field of battle will soon be gratified: You will prove a stain to the race of Bhárata: Are you not ashamed to say

that you have done nothing to the Pándavas, so as to merit this treatment from them? Remember every evil act you have done against them from their infancy; and then say you have done nothing to offend them."

Duhsásana warns Duryodhana that unless he submits to the Pándavas, the elders will deliver him up to Yudhishthira.

When Krishna had finished, Duhsásana said to his brother Duryodhana:—"O Raja, if you do not of your own will come to terms with the Pándavas, the elders will bind you hand and foot, and deliver you into the hands of Yudhishthira: It is plain that your father the Maháraja, and Bhíshma, and Drona, are heartily resolved to make you, and I, and Karna, submit ourselves to the Pándavas."

Duryodhana abruptly leaves the assembly.

At these words of his brother, Duryodhana was more incensed than ever, and he rose up in the midst of the assembly and went to his own house. Krishna then said to the Maháraja:—"Your right course now would be to confine these four turbulent men—Duryodhana, Duhsásana, Karna, and Sakuni—and so make friendship with the Pándavas, who will dedicate themselves heart and soul to your service, and enable you to reign in full comfort; and this will be for the advantage of all, both now and hereafter."

Krishna advises the Maháraja to arrest Duryodhana and his three allies.

The Maháraja summons the Rání Gandárí into the Council.

All this while the Maháraja was sorely troubled at the behaviour of Duryodhana, and he bade his brother Vidura to call the Rání Gándhárí, and inform her of all that had passed, and to request her to try and soften the obstinacy of Duryodhana. So Vidura went and brought Gándhárí into the Council, and the Maháraja said to her:—"Notwithstanding that these people have only spoken to Duryodhana out of kindness and good will, he has left the Council in a rage." Gándhárí replied:—"Do you, who are his superiors and elders, send for Duryodhana, and again counsel him: I myself have already spoken much to him; but when he will not pay attention to your words, how can you expect he will listen to me?" She then said to Vidura:—"Go and fetch Duryodhana that I may admonish him in the presence of the Maháraja." So Vidura went out and presently returned with Duryodhana; and Gándhárí said to her son:—"You know that there is not a person in the world that I hold dearer than yourself; and you know, too, that it

The Rání sends for Duryodhana and remonstrates with him in the presence of the Council.

is a grievous crime not to listen to your father and mother: And now I, and your father, and all these your kinsmen and elders, are of one opinion, that you should cast aside your obstinacy, and rest satisfied with peace, and not attribute our counsel to anything but our best wishes for your welfare and prosperity." When Duryodhana heard these words, he rose up and went out of the Council, saying nothing. And Sakuni, and Duhsásana, and Karna went out after him, and they held a consultation together, and they agreed that as all the elders had gone over to the side of the Pándavas at the instigation of Krishna, and as Krishna had suggested that they should be bound and delivered up to the Pándavas, so it would be proper to seize him and confine him; on which the Pándavas would be as powerless as serpents whose teeth had been drawn out by the charmer. Their discourse, however, was discovered to Krishna; and when Mahárája Dhritaráshtra heard of the plot, he said to Vidura:—"Go immediately and bring Duryodhana hither, lest he work mischief." And Duryodhana was brought into the presence of the Mahárája, and Krishna said to him:—"O Duryodhana, perchance it was because you thought I was alone in this city, that you thought to bind me; but behold all the gods and divine beings and the universe itself are present here in me." And at that moment all the gods issued from his body; and flames of fire fell from his eyes, nose, and ears; and the rays of the sun shone forth in all their radiance from the pores of his skin. And all the Rajas closed their eyes from the brightness of his presence. And there was a great earthquake, and all who were there trembled with great fear.

Duryodhana, Sakuni, Duhsásana, and Karna leave the Council and plot to seize Krishna.

Krishna reveals himself as the Supreme Being.

After this Krishna threw aside his divinity, and became a mortal as before. And Krishna took his leave of the Mahárája, who made many excuses, and said that the plot was none of his devising; and Krishna answered:—"I forgive you, but when a son is bad, the people will curse the father also."

Krishna reassumes his humanity, and takes his leave.

Krishna then returned to the house of Vidura to take leave of his father's sister Kuntí; and he said to her:—"I

Krishna returns to the house of Vidura, and takes leave of Kuntí.

have admonished Duryodhana in various ways in the hope of dissuading him from a war, but all my labour has proved in vain: So I shall now return to the Pándavas, and will carry any message you may choose to send." Then the spirit of Kuntí was aroused within her, and she spoke as follows:—"First present my blessings to Raja Yudhishthira, and tell him what you have seen of me, and embrace each of my other sons for me, and then deliver to them all my message thus:—'As opportunity is to be seized upon as a prey, so you must not be slack now in fighting for the inheritance of your father: Take no heed of the rank of your enemy, nor of the number of his forces, but at once seize your Raj: Remember that you are Kshatriyas; that you were not born to cultivate the soil, nor to engage in trade, nor to beg for bread, but to handle the sword and bow, to slay or to be slain; and that it is a thousand times better to be slain with honour than to live in disgrace: The time has come when you must show yourselves to be the sons of Pándu, and prove to the world that Kuntí is the mother of a noble race, and get me a good name amongst mankind: But I am nothing, and your misfortunes are nothing, when compared with the insults which were shown to your wife Draupadí when she was dragged into the assembly by her hair: If you do not revenge yourselves upon the Kauravas for the affronts they offered to your wife, it is useless for you to live: You ought to have avenged the wrong on the day it occurred, or to have died upon the spot; but since you did not do it then, there is the more cause why you should do it now.'"

Spirited message of Kuntí to her sons.

Krishna promised Kuntí that he would deliver her message to her sons, and then took his leave, and mounted his chariot and went out of the city. And as he was going he saw Karna, and he invited Karna to take a seat in his chariot, and he said to him:—"If you will accompany me and join the Pándavas, they will all respect you as their elder brother, and exalt you to the sovereignty." Karna replied:—"For sixteen years Duryodhana has entrusted me with the conduct of his Raj, and while he has ruled in his

Krishna invites Karna to join the Pándavas.

Karna refuses to desert Duryodhana, or to take a position where Arjuna would appear as his superior.

own name, I have been the real Raja: Shall I then forsake the Kauravas, who have heaped upon me such favours, and desert Duryodhana in the hour of his utmost need? Moreover, on your side there is Arjuna, and his fame is equally great on the side of the Pándavas, as mine is on the side of the Kauravas; but if I accompany you, men will never be persuaded but that I am inferior to Arjuna: As for myself, I know the valour of Arjuna, and in many combats we have learnt each other's measure; yet now destiny must decide between us: This war is like a sacrifice, and when the fire is kindled our lives will be offered up: I have seen bad omens, and I know I shall be slain; but I have eaten the bread and salt of the Kauravas, and I am resolved to fight on their side."

Parting of Krishna and Karna.

After this discourse Karna and Krishna both wept very much, and embraced each other, and Karna then took leave and returned to Hastinápur.

Krishna returns to the Pándavas and desires them to prepare for war upon the plain of Kurukshetra.

And Krishna went his way to the camp of the Pándavas, and he told to Yudhishthira and his brethren everything that had occurred from the day on which he had left them until that of his return; and he assured them that the Kauravas were preparing to march their forces to the plain of Kurukshetra, where the battle was to be fought, and that they must now in like manner prepare for war, and assemble their forces on the same plain.

Foregoing legend of the embassy of Krishna to be treated as a myth.

Evidently an episode of modern origin.

The mythical character of the foregoing legend of the embassy of Krishna may now be readily inferred from a consideration of the narrative. The story bears every appearance of being an episode, for it is altogether devoid of results, and might be omitted without creating any break in the main tradition. Its modern origin seems to be indicated by its references to Krishna as an incarnation of the Supreme Being; though upon this point it may be remarked that the original form of the episode seems to have been considerably modified by later interpolations. In the first instance, the Brahmanical

Marked difference between Krishna as a hero and as an incarnation of the Supreme Being.

compilers appear to have represented Krishna merely as a hero endeavouring to mediate between the Kauravas and Pándavas; whilst the abrupt manifestation of Krishna as the Supreme Being, having innumerable armies at his command, seems to have been the work of a later and more daring interpolator; and indeed is so clumsily introduced, and so suddenly brought to a close, that it is difficult to realize the awful spectacle, and still more difficult to estimate the effect which it ought to have had upon the beholders. Again, if the supernatural matter be eliminated from the episode, the narrative of the embassy can only be regarded as a misrepresentation of the actual relations subsisting between the Kauravas and the Pándavas; for it is imbued with a spirit of such strong partisanship towards the Pándavas, and such bitter hatred towards Duryodhana and his party, as to be almost incredible. If the Mahárája and the elders of the house of Bhárata were so warmly opposed to the pretensions of the Kauravas, and so decidedly in favour of the claims of the Pándavas, as the reports of the speeches would seem to imply, it is almost impossible to believe that they should have been induced to join in the war which followed. It might also be noticed that the proceedings of the embassy can in no way be reconciled with the previous myth that Krishna made over his army to Duryodhana; but a conflict between two myths only proves that one must be false, whilst both may be false. Further, it is somewhat singular that the proceedings of the Council at Hastinápur, at which Krishna is said to have been present, are decidedly of a turbulent character; and as such, they not only form a striking contrast to the

Suspicious character of the legend as a representation of the actual relations between the Kauravas and Pándavas.

Proceedings of the alleged embassy irreconcilable with the myth that Krishna made over his army to Duryodhana.

Turbulent character of the Council at Hastinápur, indicative that the myth belongs to the Krishna group of legends.

sober character of the more authentic Councils held by the Kauravas or the Pándavas, but bear a close resemblance to the turbulent Councils of the Yádava tribe, of whom Krishna was peculiarly the hero. Accordingly, whilst treating the narrative of the embassy of Krishna as a later interpolation, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that it belongs to the Krishna group of legends, and that it has been grafted on to the Mahâ Bhárata for the double purpose of deifying the hero, whilst associating him with the leading events in the great war.

CHAPTER XI.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE GREAT WAR.

THE events which intervened between the alleged return of Krishna from his mythical embassy, and the actual commencement of the war, are curious and significant, and appear to have occurred in the following order:—

Four important events between the alleged embassy of Krishna and the commencement of the great war.

1st, March of the Kauravas and Pándavas to the plain of Kurukshetra, and inauguration of a Generalissimo on either side.

2nd, Humiliation of Rukmin, Raja of Vidarbha.

3rd, Interchange of challenges between the Kauravas and Pándavas.

4th, Rules agreed to on both sides for ameliorating the horrors of the coming war.

1st, March of the Kauravas and Pándavas to the plain of Kurukshetra.

The first action of the rival parties which followed the return of Krishna to the camp of the Pándavas, appears to have been the march of both armies to the famous plain of Kurukshetra. This plain seems to have been selected as the area of the coming war, and was probably situated in the immediate neighbourhood of Hastinápur.[1] In the centre of the plain was a lake, and the Kauravas

[1] The plain of Kurukshetra is generally identified with the field of Paniput, which lies to the north-west of the modern city of Delhi. This plain is famous in modern history as being the site of two of the greatest and most decisive battles that have been fought in modern times. It was here that Baber, in A.D. 1525, overthrew the Afghan rulers at Delhi and established the dynasty of the Moguls;

appear to have entrenched a camp on the eastern side of the lake, whilst the Pándavas entrenched a similar camp on the western side. Accordingly, during the war which ensued, the warriors on either side marched out at sunrise into the open plain, and there engaged either in single combats or in general charges; but at sunset they returned to their respective camps, and passed the night in perfect security. The detailed description of these entrenched encampments, and the inauguration of a Generalissimo on either side, may now be related as follows:—

Duryodhana holds a Council at Hastinápur.

Now when Krishna had departed out of Hastinápur, Duryodhana held a Council, and said:—"The Pándavas have several times sent us envoys with proposals for peace, to which we have not agreed; and when Krishna came we sent him back in despair of persuading us, and he has stirred up the Pándavas to commence a war: Now a time of war is not a time for discussion, and there is nothing for us to do now but to fight valiantly, resolving to slay or to be slain, and at least die on the field of honour, and gain for ourselves great names: Be all of you of one mind, and bind yourselves with us, that so long as our souls continue in our bodies, we are sworn not to fly." Then all present at that Council made a solemn covenant together according to the word of Duryodhana. And Duryodhana summoned all his people, small and great, on the plain of Kurukshetra, and he encouraged them all separately with commendations and presents, according to their several conditions; and he ordered the ranks and arranged the standards and ensigns, and he commanded that a deep trench should be dug in the flank of his army, and he fortified the trench with towers, and on the top of the towers he placed pots full of snakes and scorpions, and pans of burning sand and boiling oil.

Solemn covenant of the Chieftains on the side of the Kauravas.

Duryodhana entrenches all his forces on the plain of Kurukshetra.

Pots of snakes and scorpions.

and it was here, in 1761, that Ahmed Shah Abdalli, the Sovereign of Cabul, inflicted such a crushing blow upon the Mahrattas as indirectly cleared the way for the establishment of British supremacy.

Duryodhana proposes that Bhishma should be Generalissimo.

Duryodhana then held a great Council on the plain of Kurukshetra of all the Rajas that had come to aid him, and all the Chieftains that were in his army; and standing up in the midst, he proposed that Bhíshma should be made Generalissimo of all the allied armies on the side of the Kauravas, as one who had not his match in all the world.

Bhíshma agrees, on conditions.

Upon this Bhíshma said:—"My relationship to the Pándavas is precisely the same as my relationship to the Kauravas; nevertheless, as I now find myself amongst your forces, I will engage not to relax my exertions in your behalf: With Arjuna I do not desire to fight, but I will engage readily with all others who may come out against me: Inasmuch, however, as Karna pretends to be on an equality with me, I most assuredly will not fight unless he abstains from the battle."

Karna absents himself so long as Bhishma is alive.

At these words Karna said:—"I have already declared that so long as Bhíshma is alive and takes the field, I will neither put on armour nor engage in combat; but if any accident befall him I will then stand forward as the equal of Arjuna, and engage in battle with him, that it may be seen to whom will be given the victory and triumph."

Bhishma solemnly inaugurated as Commander-in-Chief of the Kauravas.

After this, Duryodhana said to Bhíshma:—"Will you honour us by ascending the throne, that we may all stand with our hands reverently joined before you, and that all may know that you are the Generalissimo?" Then all the other Rajas united in soliciting Bhíshma, and he rose up and bathed, and clothed himself with royal robes, and perfumed himself, and was brought into the assembly with a royal umbrella over his head; and all the Rajas and Chieftains placed him upon the throne of royalty, and they all stood before him with their hands joined, and the drums of royalty were beaten in the name of Bhíshma.

Pándavas marshall their forces, and appoint Dhrishtadyumna to be Generalissimo.

Meanwhile Yudhishthira and his brethren marshalled all the forces of themselves and their allies, and they took counsel together as to who should be elected to command the whole; and after much discourse they chose Dhrishtadyumna, the son of Raja Drupada, and brother of their wife Draupadí. So all the armies of the Pándavas were put under

the command of Dhrishta-dyumna, and it was everywhere proclaimed that all were to be obedient to him, and that no one was to transgress his orders. Then all the warriors on the side of the Pándavas fell into their ranks, and the drums were beaten, and they marched to the plain of Kurukshetra, and saw that the army of the Kauravas was encamped on the eastern side of the lake, which was in the centre of the plain. Then the army of the Pándavas halted on the western side of the lake, so that the lake lay between them and the Kauravas; and Arjuna and Krishna blew their white shells with all their might. And the Pándavas had the river Saraswati on one side of them, and on the other side they dug a deep trench for security; and they appointed signs or watchwords, so that at night time each party might pass in safety to his own quarters, and the guards be ever on the alert.

Pándavas march to the plain of Kurukshetra.

Lake in the centre of the plain; the Pándavas encamp on one side of the lake, and the Kauravas on the other.

Appointment of signs and watchwords.

After this the Pándavas heard that the Kauravas had enthroned Bhíshma as Generalissimo of all their armies, and they determined to perform the same ceremony with Dhrishta-dyumna. Accordingly they placed Dhrishta-dyumna on a throne before all the assembly, and gave him all the ensigns of royalty, and stood before him with joined hands in the posture of servants. At this moment Balaráma, the brother of Krishna, together with others of the Yádavas, arrived at the camp of the Pándavas, and entered their assembly; and all present arose and saluted them. And Balaráma said:—"These two armies, which are directly opposed to each other, present only bad omens, and I cannot endure to behold this contention: Duryodhana and Bhíma are both my pupils, for I taught to each of them the use of the mace; and I will therefore go and worship at the tombs of my fathers at Prabhása." So Balaráma took leave of Krishna and the Pándavas, and went his way to the place called Prabhása,[2] which is nigh unto the city of Dwáraká.

Pándavas enthrone Dhrishta-dyumna.

Balaráma visits the camp of the Pándavas, but refuses to engage in the war.

Generally authentic character of the foregoing narrative of the entrenchment of the rival camps and the inauguration of Generalissimos.

The foregoing simple details of the entrench-

[2] Prabhása is a place of pilgrimage in the immediate neighbourhood of Dwáraká.

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ments of the rival camps on the plain of Kurukshetra, and the ceremonies which accompanied the inauguration of a Generalissimo on either side, are generally natural and interesting. It may be that the pots of snakes and scorpions, and pans of burning sand and boiling oil, which were employed by Duryodhana as a means of defence, are mere mythical embellishments of the later bards; and so too may be the description of the regal ceremonies which were performed on the appointment of a Generalissimo. But these incidents in no way mar the interest of the narrative, nor do they seriously detract from the authenticity of the tradition; and, indeed, may be regarded as exaggerations of what actually occurred, rather than as myths originating solely in the imaginations of the Brahmanical compilers.

Dubious incidents.

2nd, Legend of the humiliation of Rukmin.

The story of the humiliation of Rukmin belongs to a somewhat different category; but before offering any remarks it will be necessary to glance at the outline of the legend, which may be related as follows:—

Rukmin, Raja of Vidarbha, joins the army of the Pándavas, but is dismissed for his extravagant pretensions.

After this, Rukmin, Raja of Vidarbha, came up with an army to aid the Pándavas, and he was received with much respect by Yudhishthira and his brethren, and a great feast was given to him. And when Rukmin had feasted, he went into the assembly and spoke with a loud voice to Arjuna, saying:—"Now that I am come hither from so great a distance, you need be under no apprehensions: I am not as other men, for even Indra dreads my power, and as for Drona, or Bhíshma, or Karna, I pledge myself to conquer all of them; but you on your part must pledge yourselves to me, that when you shall enter into possession of the Raj of the Kauravas, you will allot me a portion of the country." When Arjuna saw that Rukmin gave himself such conse-

quence, he was very wroth, and said:—"What idle pretensions are these? For your coming hither we are much obliged, but your extravagant boasting is more than we can bear; so you may stay or go, just as you please." Then Rukmin was very angry, and he set off with drums beating to visit Duryodhana; and Duryodhana received him with great respect, and manifested as much joy as Yudhishthira had done. But after awhile Rukmin became boastful and arrogant as before, and Duryodhana said to him:—"Although you have come to my aid, yet I cannot be friends with a man like you; and I therefore beseech you to take your army to some other place." So Rukmin arose in great wrath, and returned back to his own country.

Rukmin goes over to the Kauravas, but is dismissed by Duryodhana for the same reason.

Returns to his own country.

The foregoing legend is suspicious, from its apparent want of purpose. That a pretentious Chieftain should have offended both parties by his arrogance and boasting is intelligible and true to human nature; but the question arises of why such a simple occurrence should have found its way into the national Epic. The episode, however, is apparently a later myth belonging to the Krishna group. In the traditionary history of Krishna, Rukmin takes a prominent part, by refusing to give his beautiful sister Rukminí in marriage to Krishna, who accordingly carried her away on the eve of her marriage to Sisupála.[3] The object of the episode thus appears to have been to represent Rukmin in an unfavourable light, because he had contemptuously refused to give his sister in marriage to the divine hero.

Mythical character of the foregoing legend indicated by its apparent want of purpose.

Connection of the myth with the legendary history of Krishna.

The next event which intervened between the mythical embassy of Krishna and the actual commencement of the war, was the interchange of

3rd, Interchange of challenges between the Kauravas and Pándavas.

[3] The legend of the slaughter of Supisála by Krishna at the Rajasúya of Yudhishthira has already been narrated at page 169.

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challenges between the Kauravas and the Pándavas. It should here be remarked that it was the custom amongst the ancient warriors to abuse each other in exaggerating language prior to engaging in combat; probably with the view of exciting their enmity against each other to the highest possible pitch before coming to close quarters. It will now be seen that the challenges between the rival armies partook very much of this exasperating character. Instead of a formal declaration of a war, accompanied perhaps by a solemn appeal to the God of battles, as is customary with more civilized nations, the messages which were interchanged by these rude warriors were couched in the barbarous but outspoken language of anger and hatred; and as such, are strikingly illustrative of that uncultivated stage of moral development when men delight in provoking the wrath of their enemies, and regard revenge as a duty and moderation as a crime. The legend of this interchange of challenges may be thus narrated:—

Custom of warriors to abuse each other prior to fighting.

Abusive character of the present challenges.

Duryodhana sends a kinsman with a challenge to the Pándavas.

Now when the armies on both sides were prepared for battle, Duryodhana called one of his kinsmen to carry a challenge to the Pándavas according to the custom. So

Language of the challenge.

the kinsman went to the Pándavas, and said:—"You have sworn, O Pándavas, that when your exile was expired you would come out to war against us; and the time has now arrived when you should fulfil your oath: You have been deprived of your Raj, and your wife Draupadí has been grievously insulted, and you yourselves have been driven into exile: Why then do you sit unconcerned, when you ought to rush into war with your hearts on fire? Where is the sleepy Bhíma that threatened to drink the blood of Duhsásana? Lo Duhsásana is here, but where is Bhíma? Where too is the presumptuous Arjuna, who thought to

drive his fist at Drona, and who shocked us by expecting that the pupil would get the better of his preceptor? Perchance when Mount Sumara is levelled with the dust, and the earth rises above it, and men catch the wind with their fingers, Arjuna may take Drona prisoner, but not before then: But we are assured that whoever comes out to battle against Bhíshma or Drona, be he man or elephant, will never escape with his life; and though you are our brethren and kinsmen, and have lived amongst us, yet you know nothing of our prowess; like the frog who dwells in a river and knows nothing of the caves beneath it: And although Arjuna prides himself on the protection of Krishna, and relies on his bow as long as a palmira tree, yet to obtain a Raj, men should have good fortune as well as strength, and of what use was the bow of Arjuna and the mace of Bhíma on the day of the gambling match when you staked yourselves to become our slaves? If Krishna were a thousand times as strong as he is, and Arjuna ten thousand times, they could not cope with us, nor match themselves with us on the field of battle."

Extreme wrath of the Pándavas.

At this message from the Kauravas, the Pándavas were so violently incensed that nothing could exceed their wrath. Bhíma looked towards Krishna, and said to his brethren:—

Bhíma's reference to Krishna.

"Where Krishna is present, it is not becoming of me to appear presumptuous, but I know full well what answer I would give to this contemptible fellow." Krishna then said to the messenger:—

Mythical reply sent by Krishna to the Kauravas.

"You, who all boast so proudly, and presume to despatch such a message to a camp where I am present, will soon behold what will befall your own lives, and the lives of all your armies, from the power and majesty of Yudhishthira, and the strength and skill of Arjuna, whom you regard so lightly: Just as fire burns up dry grass will I consume your armies, and when I am mounted on the driving-seat of Arjuna's chariot, Duryodhana may mount up to the highest heaven or go down to the lowest hell, but he shall ever see my face urging Arjuna's chariot full against him: And as for the sneering message Duryodhana has sent to Bhíma, because he vowed to drink the blood of

Duhsásana, I regard his vow as already fulfilled, for certain it is that he will perform all that he has said: On the morrow Yudhishthira, and Arjuna, and Bhíma, will display their prowess in the presence of all; they are not, as you are, prone to arrogant boastings; but they will prove by their deeds on the field of battle what they can do."

Arjuna's reply to the challenge.

When Krishna had finished, Arjuna spoke thus to the messenger:—"Whatever may be said, or whatever may be done, there should be no boasting of valour: But say these words to Duryodhana:—'If you be a man speak for yourself, and do not brag of the valour of Bhíshma or of Drona, for such conduct is only befitting in women: Had you been a man you would have spoken of yourself, and if you only send Drona and Bhíshma to the field, you had better put a veil upon your head and remain with the women: Bhíshma is our father, and he is lord of us as well as of you; and Drona is our tutor; therefore I shall not draw the sword against the face of either, unless either attack me; but let Duryodhana come himself to the field, and try my prowess: As for Duhsásana being in the army of the Kauravas, I am glad of it, for he is a disgrace wherever he is; and whatever may be the army in which he takes his stand, that army will never behold the face of victory: Go now and tell Duryodhana all that you have heard."

Replies of Krishna and Arjuna carried to the Kauravas.

So the messenger went his way, and told to Duryodhana and the Kauravas all that had been said; and Karna cried out:—"I have no patience with this peddling talk! We must now think of war, and messengers must be sent to all our armies that all may be ready when the drums beat on the morrow." And Duryodhana did as Karna had said.

Foregoing legend rendered dubious by the references to Krishna.

The force of the foregoing legend is somewhat weakened by the references to Krishna, and the introduction of Krishna's speech, which are evidently foreign to the main story. Indeed, the speech of Krishna is so palpably mythical and superfluous as to render comment almost unnecessary. In the original tradition the message of Arjuna no doubt

Message of Krishna palpably mythical.

Message of Arjuna probably the only one sent to the challenge of Duryodhana.

formed the sole and appropriate answer to the insulting challenge of Duryodhana; for it is difficult to believe that the weak and bombastic language of Krishna could possibly have found a place in the Kshatriya story before it fell into the hands of the Brahmanical compilers.

4th, Rules agreed to on both sides for ameliorating the horrors of the coming war.

The next event which preceded the breaking out of hostilities was the alleged agreement of both Kauravas and Pándavas to certain rules, which tended greatly to ameliorate the savage character of ancient war. The legend of this significant agreement may be thus related:—

Circumstances which preceded the promulgation of the rules.

Now at the same time that the messenger left the assembly of the Pándavas, Raja Yudhishthira said:—"War is now close upon us, and we must appoint our warriors to their several posts." And it was agreed that Dhrishtadyumna should fight Drona, and Yudhishthira fight Salya, and Nakula fight Aswatthámа, and Bhíma fight Duryodhana, and Arjuna fight Karna, and others of the Pándavas fight others of the Kauravas.

Rules framed by Bhishma and Drona, and agreed to by Yudhishthira.

And when it was evening and all was ready for the battle, Bhíshma and Drona sent certain messengers to Yudhishthira, saying:—"Now that a war is fully determined upon between us, it is necessary to settle that it should be maintained on right principles; let it, therefore, be agreed between us as follows:—

(1.) No stratagem or treachery.

"1. We will make war on each other without stratagem, and without treachery:

(2.) Perfect truce between the combats.

"2. When we are fighting one with the other we will on each side stand to our arms to slay or to be slain, to take captive or to become captive; but when we leave off fighting, our people and your people are free to mess together, and may come or go to each other's quarters, and hold conference together:

(3.) Fugitives, suppliants, drummers, and chariot-drivers, to be treated as non-combatants.

"3. We will not slay the man who runs away, nor he who throws down his arms, nor he who beats a drum, nor he who drives a chariot:

"4. Horsemen shall only fight with horsemen, riders on elephants with riders on elephants, warriors in chariots with warriors in chariots, and footmen with footmen:

(4.) A superior arm to fight only its equal.

"5. When the warriors are fighting with words only, and are abusing one another, no one amongst them shall take up arms against the other:

(5.) No combat to take place during the preliminary abuse.

"6. No man shall take up arms against another without giving him warning:

(6.) No combat to take place without warning.

"7. When two combatants are engaged with each other, no third man shall interfere."

(7.) No third warrior to interfere between two combatants.

And when the messengers delivered these words to the Pándavas, Raja Yudhishthira and Krishna rejoiced greatly; and Yudhishthira said:—"Bhíshma is our lord, and Drona is the preceptor of us all; therefore their words are a law to us which we will all obey."

Foregoing rules apparently of modern date.

The foregoing rules are curious and suggestive, but they evidently belong to a later age of civilization than the war of the Mahá Bhárata. It will be seen, hereafter, that they were almost entirely disregarded in the deadly contest which ensued between the Kauravas and the Pándavas; and, indeed, they are out of keeping both with the barbarous character of the times, and the ferocious enmity which prevailed between the rival kinsmen. The probability is that they were inserted by the Brahmanical compilers as authoritative rules, promulgated under the special sanction of the heroes of the Mahá Bhárata, and consequently obligatory upon all warriors in after ages. Indeed, it may be inferred, from the tone of the rules, that they did not originate with fighting men; but rather with a priest caste who were but imperfectly acquainted with the theory of war, and who had no practical acquaintance with the spirit in which it must be carried on. In the first rule stratagem is for-

Disregarded in the war of the Mahá Bhárata.

Brahmanical origin of the rules.

Confusion between stratagem and treachery.

bidden, and is apparently confounded with treachery; whereas ambushes, surprises, and deceptive appearances were the life and soul of ancient warfare. Then again, the perfect peace which according to the second rule was to prevail between the two parties in the intervals of fighting, could scarcely have been observed in that mortal struggle which was avowedly a war to the knife, in which neither party could gain the victory without the slaughter of all its antagonists. The third rule was apparently more reasonable. It virtually ordered that all fugitives, and all who threw down their arms, as well as all drummers and chariot-drivers, should be treated as non-combatants. The fourth rule, which declared that horsemen should only fight with horsemen, elephant riders with elephant riders, chariots with chariots, and footmen with footmen, is evidently the conception of a philanthropic mind wholly ignorant of the practice of war. Ancient armies consisted mainly of infantry, and in all probability this was the case in the armies that fought in the war of the Mahá Bhárata; whilst horses, elephants, and chariots were employed, not so much to act against forces of a similar character, as to charge the masses of foot soldiers, and disperse that all-important arm. The fifth, sixth, and seventh rules may have belonged to more ancient times, and indeed are singularly illustrative of the primitive simplicity of primeval wars. The fifth rule provided that so long as two warriors, or companies of warriors, were abusing each other, or confining themselves to a mere battle of words, no man amongst them should take up arms against another whatever might be the provocation he had received. The

Impracticability of the constantly recurring truces.

Rational rule as regards non-combatants.

Absurdity of the rule that cavalry should only fight with cavalry, &c.

Possible antiquity of the 5th, 6th, and 7th rules.

Natural law against fighting during the preliminary abuse, or without warning, or for a third warrior to interfere between two combatants.

sixth rule provided that no man should take up arms against another without giving him previous warning. The seventh rule provided that when two warriors were fighting together, a third warrior should not interfere. But even these three latter rules, which were fully recognized as a standard of morality by the compilers of both the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana, were by no means rigidly observed, either by the warriors who fought in the war of Bhárata, or by the great hero of the Rámáyana.

Non-observance of the law by the ancient heroes.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EIGHTEEN DAYS OF THE GREAT WAR.

Eve of the great war of Bhárata.

THE great war of Bhárata was now on the eve of breaking out. Every preliminary had been arranged for the commencement of hostilities, and the rival parties were apparently thirsting for the battle. Nothing, save perhaps religious animosity, appears to have been wanting to render the war a ferocious and deadly struggle. They were near kinsmen fighting for an inheritance. The jealousy and hatred of years was rankling in their hearts. The Kauravas were in possession of the Raj, and had succeeded for a long period in excluding their kinsmen from any share in the possession. The Pándavas, with the exception of their timid elder brother, were like starving men fighting for the means of subsistence; and to some extent they may have been actuated by a desire to revenge the affront inflicted upon Draupadí. At the same time it must be remarked, that throughout the narrative there is not a single reference to nationality or patriotism, religion or sentiment. The war was neither a contest against a foreign invader, nor an internal struggle against a tyrant, nor a loyal rising in favour of a deposed ruler, nor a crusade in behalf of religion, nor even an aggression for the sake of conquest. It was a

Mean character of the war.

mere war to the knife between near kinsmen for the sake of land; and it was but little redeemed by those ideas of right and justice which occasionally elevate warriors into heroes, and convert the bloody conflict of armies into a final and solemn appeal to the God of battles.

Form in which the history of the war has been preserved.

Extraordinary extent to which the original Kshatriya tradition has been enlarged and interpolated by the Brahmanical compilers.

The form, however, in which the history of this war has been preserved is most extraordinary. In the original Kshatriya tradition the story was probably told in a series of war-ballads, narrating at some length the combats between the more celebrated warriors, and the many turns in the progress of the struggle. But in the more modern Brahmanical version of the Mahá Bhárata these simple incidents have been spun out to a tedious and bewildering length. Puerile dialogues have been introduced at every fluctuation of the fortunes of the war, apparently not so much to add to the stock of facts as to impress the leading events more deeply upon the memories of an uncultured audience. Then, again, this portion of the narrative has been interpolated in all directions with miraculous feats of arms, and other supernatural details, as well as with prolix discourses upon moral and religious subjects, which are utterly at variance with the spirit of the ancient tradition. The result has been that whilst the childish conversations and weird-like scenes and incidents have even to the present day a strange fascination for the dreamy and credulous intellect of the Hindú, the wearisome string of senseless talk, extravagant fables, and irrelevant disquisitions, is so foreign to European tastes and ideas, and so wanting in historical significance, as to be positively nauseous to enlightened readers. Accordingly, in

Necessity for eliminating a large portion of the matter in order to render the narrative available for historical purposes.

dealing with this portion of the Mahá Bhárata, it has been deemed expedient to eliminate a considerable mass of details from the story of the war. The dialogues have been cut away, excepting where they really possessed a dramatic value and illustrated the individual character of the speakers. The descriptions of combats and charges, which in many cases are mere repetitions, have been omitted to a very considerable extent; and only those incidents and scenes have been selected which seemed likely to convey an approximate idea of the real nature and extent of the contest. In a like manner the didactic discourses, which are evidently the product of a Brahmanical age, have been excluded from the text and reserved for future discussion.

Diffuse dialogues.

Wearisome descriptions of combats and charges all resembling each other.

Brahmanical discourses.

Before, however, proceeding with the task of selection, it may be convenient to specify more particularly the character and scope of the matter which has been laid aside; especially as such a description will serve to indicate more clearly the heterogeneous elements which compose the national Epic. In the first place, it may be remarked that the war is said to have lasted eighteen days; and though it was probably included within a much more restricted period, yet still for the present the term of eighteen days may be accepted. The armies, however, which were engaged on either side, are said to have included such vast numbers of forces that the account may be safely rejected as altogether incredible. Princes from the remotest quarters of India, the mythical ancestors of the Rajas who reigned during the period when the modern version of the Mahá Bhárata appears to have been composed, are said to have ranged themselves either on the side of the Kaura-

General description of the excluded matter.

Mythical references to the vast armies engaged on either side.

vas, or on that of the Pándavas, accompanied by mighty hosts to which even the fabled armies of Semiramis and Xerxes sink into insignificance. Indeed the number of forces said to have been engaged on this memorable occasion far exceed all ordinary calculation, consisting of millions, billions, trillions, and even more extravagant enumerations; so that if all the present inhabitants of the earth were assumed to be fit to carry arms, and were multiplied a thousand times over, they would still fall very far short of the number of men who are said to have fought to the death on the plain of Kurukshetra. Even the elephants and chariots are counted by lakhs and crores, or, in other words, by hundreds of thousands and tens of millions.

Mythical details of the battles.

The details of this primitive war have been in like manner exaggerated beyond all credibility.

Superhuman strength and skill of the warriors engaged.

The leading warriors, whilst fighting with all the bloodthirsty desperation of savages, and burning with all the frenzied wrath of demons, are endowed with superhuman strength and skill which raise them to the rank of demigods.

Employment of magical weapons.

Magical weapons are employed which are said to have been received from the gods, but which could only have existed in the wild imaginations of Brahmanical bards who were totally ignorant of the practice of war.

Supernatural exploits.

Chariots are said to have been broken in pieces, or burnt to ashes, by the discharge of a single arrow. Elephants are felled to the earth and slaughtered by single-handed warriors. Armies are subdued and slain by the arrows of individual heroes. The picture thus presented of the field of battle resembles a troubled and unearthly dream.

Extraordinary omens.

On the eve of the war fearful omens appear in the heavens and upon the

earth, portending the most terrible calamities. Showers of blood fall from the sky; the roll of thunder is heard when not a cloud is to be seen; the moon burns like fire; asses are born from cows, cows from mares, and jackals from dogs. The battle commences with all the pomp and circumstance of an ideal war, mingled with its worst realities. Drums are beaten, trumpets and war-shells are sounded, and gorgeous banners are waving in the air. Gigantic Rajas, magnificently arrayed in golden mail, and armed with every weapon, are standing up in their chariots, radiant with the strings of jewels which sparkle upon their necks and arms. Armies are drawn up in fantastic shapes, such as a spider's web, a half-moon, or a bird with outstretched wings. Elephants, cavalry, and endless hosts of infantry, are swayed to and fro like the rushing waves of a boundless sea at the new and full moon. The air is thick with darts and arrows, or illuminated with the flashing of swords and spears. But meantime the sky is rent with the shrieks and screams of the wounded and dying; and the plain is overflowing with the rivers of blood which have issued from the myriads of human beings who are said to have been slaughtered in that universal struggle.

Exaggerated pomp and circumstance.

Exaggerated slaughter.

If, however, in the place of innumerable armies and superhuman battles, the attention is directed to the real nature of the contest, namely, a war to the knife between two branches of the same family for possession of a landed inheritance, it is possible to arrive at a much clearer perception of the number of forces which were actually engaged, and the real character and scope of the memorable contest. It will be seen that the issue of the great war did not

Real character of the contest: a war to the knife between two branches of the same family for the possession of a landed inheritance.

Probable numbers engaged.

depend upon the engagements of armies, but upon the combats of individual warriors; and indeed so much stress is laid upon these single combats that the innumerable hosts, which are said to have been led upon the field, dwindle down into mere companies of friends and retainers. Again, it will be seen that whilst the Brahmanical compilers love to dwell upon combats with magical darts and arrows, which could only have been carried on when the enemy was at a certain distance; yet the decisive combats were those in which the rude warriors on either side came to close quarters. Then they fought each other with clubs, knives, and clenched fists; and cut, and hacked, and hewed, and wrestled, and kicked, until the conqueror threw down his adversary, and severed his head from his body, and carried away the bleeding trophy in savage triumph. Meantime it seems evident, notwithstanding the rules which had been laid down on the eve of the war, and notwithstanding the efforts of the Brahmanical compilers to conceal or explain away the facts, that treachery, deceit, and foul play were freely practised, even by such a warrior as Arjuna; and it is curious to observe that efforts are made in his case to sanctify the deed, by representing the divine hero, Krishna, as inciting him to the act, and then extenuating the crime.

Barbarous single combats with clubs and knives.

Free practice of treachery, deceit, and foul play.

But there remains one other anomalous characteristic of the history of the great war, as it is recorded in the Mahá Bhárata, which cannot be passed over in silence; and that is the extraordinary abruptness and infelicity with which Brahmanical discourses, such as essays on law, on morals, sermons on divine things, and even instruction in the

Irrelevant introduction of Brahmanical disquisitions.

so called sciences, are recklessly grafted upon the main narrative. Sanjaya, the charioteer, who is employed to inform the blind Mahárája of every event that transpired during the progress of the war, entertains his Royal Master with a preliminary dissertation upon the geography of the earth in general, and of the continent of India in particular. Krishna and Arjuna, on the morning of the first day of the war, when both armies are drawn out in battle-array, and hostilities are about to begin, enter into a long and philosophical dialogue respecting the various forms of devotion which lead to the emancipation of the soul; and it cannot be denied that however incongruous and irrelevant such a dialogue must appear on the eve of battle, the discourse of Krishna, whilst acting as the charioteer of Arjuna, contains the essence of the most spiritual phases of Brahmanical teaching, and is expressed in language of such depth and sublimity that it has become deservedly known as the Bhagavat-Gítá, or "Divine Song." The venerable patriarch Bhíshma, after receiving a mortal wound, is not permitted to die; but lies, like an ascetic, upon a couch formed of the upturned points of arrows, in order that many weeks after the war he may deliver to Yudhishthira a lengthy address upon the duties of Rajas and the final emancipation of the soul. Still more incongruous is a sermon on the efficacy of places of pilgrimage, which is introduced just before the final combat with clubs between Duryodhana and Bhíma. Indeed no effort has been spared by the Brahmanical compilers to convert the history of the great war into a vehicle for Brahmanical teaching; and indeed so skilfully are many of these interpolations interwoven with

Sanjaya's discourse on geography to the blind Mahárája.

Dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna on the field of battle, known as the Bhagavat-Gítá, or "Divine Song."

Bhíshma's discourse on the duties of Rajas, whilst lying mortally wounded on a couch of arrow-heads.

Final combat between Duryodhana and Bhíma prefaced by a sermon on the efficacy of places of pilgrimage.

the story that it is frequently impossible to narrate the one without referring to the other, however irrelevant the matter may be to the main subject in hand.[1]

[1] Some idea may be formed of the original by the following translation of the first chapter of the Bhagavad-Gítá, which comprises the appearance of the field of battle on the morning of the first day. It will be seen that the blind Maháraja Dhritaráshtra is being informed by his charioteer Sanjaya of what had taken place. The translation is by Mr J. C. Thomson, and has been extracted from his valuable edition of the Bhagavad-Gítá.

"Dhritaráshtra spoke.

What did my followers and those of Pándu do, when assembled for the purpose of fighting on the sacred plain, the plain of Kuru, Sanjaya?

"Sanjaya spoke.

When King Duryodhana beheld the army of the Pándavas drawn up in order, he then approached his preceptor and spoke these words: 'Behold, O preceptor! this huge army of the sons of Pándu, drawn up by thy clever pupil, the son of Drupada. In it are warriors with huge bows, equal to Bhíma and Arjuna in battle (namely): Yuyudhána and Viráta, and Drupada on his great car; Dhrishtaketu, Chekitána, and the valiant King of Káshi; Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Shaivya, chief of men; and Yudhámanyu the strong, and Uttamaujas the brave, the son of Subhadrá, and all the sons of Draupadí, too, in their huge chariots. But remark those, who are the most distinguished amongst us, the leaders of my army, O best of Bráhmans! I will name them to thee, that thou mayst know them.

"'There are thyself, and Bhíshma, and Karna, and Kripa, victorious in battle, Aswatthámа, and Vikarna, and Saumadatti too, and many other heroes, who risk their lives for my sake armed with divers weapons, all experienced in war. This army of mine, which is commanded by Bhíshma, is not sufficient; but that army of theirs, commanded by Bhíma, is sufficient. And do you, even all of you, drawn up in all the ranks of the army, according to your grades, attend even to Bhíshma.'

"Then, in order to encourage him, the ardent old ancestor of the Kurus blew his trumpet, sounding loud as the roar of a lion. Then, on a sudden, trumpets, kettle-drums, cymbals, drums, and horns were sounded. That noise grew to an uproar. And standing on a huge car drawn by white horses, the slayer of Madhu and the son of Pándu blew their celestial trumpets. Krishna (blew his horn called) Pánchajanya; the Despiser of wealth blew 'the Gift of the Gods;' he of dreadful deeds and wolfish entrails blew a great trumpet called Paundra; King Yudhishthira, the son of Kunti, blew 'the Eternal Victory;' Nakula and Sahadeva blew 'the Sweet-toned' and the 'Blooming-with-jewels.' The King of Káshi, renowned for the excellence of his bow, and Shikandin in his huge chariot, Dhrishta-dyumna, and Viráta and Sátyaki, unconquered by his foes; and Drupada and the sons of Draupadí, altogether, O king of earth! and the strong-armed son of Subhadrá, each severally blew their trumpets. That noise lacerated the hearts of the sons of Dhritaráshtra, an uproar resounding both through heaven and earth. Now when Arjuna beheld the Dhártaráshtras drawn up, and that the flying of arrows had commenced, he raised his bow, and then addressed these words, O king of earth! to Krishna.

"'Draw up my chariot, O Eternal One! between the two armies, that I may examine these men drawn up and anxious for battle, (and see) with whom I have

With these preliminary observations it may now be possible to select those descriptions which may

to fight in the strife of war. I perceive that those who are assembled here are about to fight, from a wish by so doing to do a favour to the evil-minded son of Dhritaráshtra.'

"Sanjaya spoke.

Krishna being thus addressed by Arjuna, O Bhárata! drew up that best of chariots between the two armies; and before Bhíshma and Drona and all the kings of the earth, he said :—

"'Behold, O King! these Kurus here assembled.' Standing there, the King beheld fathers and grandfathers, preceptors and maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and friends, fathers-in-law and acquaintances, in both of the armies. Gazing on all these relations drawn up (in battle-array), the son of Kunti, moved by extreme compassion, spoke with sadness, as follows :—

"Arjuna spoke.

"'Now that I have beheld here this kindred standing near together for the purpose of fighting, my limbs give way, and my face is dried up (of the blood in my veins) and tremour is produced throughout my body, and my hair stands on end. My bow, Gándíva, slips from my hand, and my skin, too, burns (with fever). Nor am I able to remain upright, and my mind is, as it were, whirling round. And I perceive adverse omens, O hairy one! Nor do I foresee anything better, even when I shall have slain these relations in battle. I seek not victory, Krishna, nor a kingdom, nor pleasures. What should we do with a kingdom, Govinda? What with enjoyments, or with life itself, (if we slew these relatives)? Those very men —on whose account we might desire a kingdom, enjoyments, or pleasures—are assembled for battle, having given up their lives and riches. Teachers, fathers, and even sons, and grandfathers, uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, with connections also—these I would not wish to slay, though I were slain myself, O killer of Madhu!—not even for the sake of the sovereignty of the triple world, how much less for that of this earth! When we had killed the Dhártaráshtras, what pleasure should we have, O thou who art prayed to by mortals? We should incur a crime were we to put to death these villains. Therefore we are not right to kill the Dhártaráshtras, our own relations, for how could we be happy, after killing our own kindred, O slayer of Madhu?

"'Even if they whose reason is obscured by covetousness, do not perceive the crime committed in destroying their own tribe, nor a sin in the oppression of their friends, should we not know how to recoil from such a sin—we, who do look upon the slaughter of one's tribe as a crime, O thou who art supplicated by mortals? In the destruction of a tribe, the eternal institutions (laws) of the tribe are destroyed. Those laws being destroyed, lawlessness prevails throughout the whole tribe. From the existence of lawlessness the women of the tribe become corrupted, Krishna; and when the women are corrupted, O son of Vrishni! confusion of caste takes place. Confusion of caste is (a gate) to hell both for the destroyers of the tribe and for the tribe itself. For their fathers are deprived of the rites of funeral-cakes and libations of water, and thus fall (from heaven). By the crimes of the destroyers of a tribe, and by those who cause confusion of caste, the eternal institutions of caste and tribe are subversed. We have learnt (from sacred writ) that a sojourn in hell necessarily awaits the men who subvert the institutions of their tribe, O Krishna! Alas! we have determined to commit a great crime, since, from the desire of sovereignty and pleasures, we

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART II.

serve to throw some light upon this ancient and memorable war. The hostilities are said to have extended over eighteen days; and the narrative may be subdivided into four periods of irregular duration, according to the days during which the four successive Generalissimos of the Kauravas held the command. Upon this point it may be remarked that the Pándavas retained their Generalissimo, Dhrishta-dyumna, from the beginning until the end of the contest; but that four successive Generalissimos of the Kauravas fell upon the field of battle. Bhíshma, who was appointed at the commencement of the struggle, was slain on the tenth day of his command. Drona, the old preceptor of the Kauravas and Pándavas, succeeded Bhíshma, but was slain on the fifth day of his command, or fifteenth of the war. Karna was next appointed Generalissimo, but he was slain on the second day of his command, or seventeenth of the war. Finally, on the eighteenth and last day of the war, Sálya was appointed to the command, and slain before nightfall. Accordingly, the eighteen days of the war may be divided into four terms, as follows:—

Narrative of the eighteen days of the war divided into four periods, corresponding to the four commands of the four successive Generalissimos of the Kauravas, viz. Bhishma, Drona, Karna, and Sálya.

(1) Bhíshma's command	. . .	10 days.
(2) Drona's command	. . .	5 ,,
(3) Karna's command	. . .	2 ,,
(4) Sálya's command	. . .	1 ,,
		Total, 18 days.

1st, Bhíshma's command—ten days.

The narrative of the war of Bhárata during the

are prepared to slay our own kin. Better were it for me, if the Dhártaráshtras, being armed, would slay me, harmless and unresisting in the fight.'

"Sanjaya spoke.

Having thus spoken in the midst of the battle, Arjuna, whose heart was troubled with grief, let fall his bow and arrow, and sat down on the bench of the chariot."

ten days of Bhíshma's command is little more than a description of battles, in which neither the Kauravas nor the Pándavas gained any decided advantage. It commences with an incident which is singularly illustrative of the feelings of respect and veneration towards Brahmanical preceptors which prevailed in later times. In its present place, this incident must be regarded as a mythical interpolation, but it is none the less worthy of consideration. It is also associated with another event of dubious authenticity; but before offering any comments, it may be as well to relate the story as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata:—

Mythical story of Yudhishthira's respect for his elders and preceptors, and Yuyutsu's desertion to the Pándavas.

Now, when the night had passed away, and the morning of the first day of the great war dawned upon the plain of Kurukshetra, both armies marched out and faced each other, and the air was filled with the beating of drums and the sounding of shells. And Yudhishthira suddenly descended from his chariot, and proceeded towards the army of the Kauravas; and Arjúna and his brethren, and Krishna and the other Rajas, dismounted in like manner and walked after him to see what he purposed doing; and they earnestly asked him the reason of his going, but he answered not a word. At this moment a great uproar arose amongst the Kauravas, and they said one to the other:—"Terror has got the better of Yudhishthira, and he has come to demand peace of Bhíshma; and certain it is that he is not a true Kshatriya." And they danced for joy, and then held their peace that they might hear what Yudhishthira had to say. And Yudhishthira went first to Bhíshma and paid him reverence, and requested his permission to fight against the Kauravas, and Bhíshma granted him leave; and he then went to his preceptor Drona, and paid him reverence also, and in like manner asked his permission, and Drona granted his request; and Bhíshma and Drona both said to Yudhishthira:—"We fight on the side of the Kauravas because for

Morning of the first day.

Yudhishthira proceeds on foot to the army of the Kauravas.

Asks the permission of Bhíshma and Drona to fight against the Kauravas.

many years we have eaten their bread and salt, or otherwise we would have fought for you." Then Yudhishthira returned to the army of the Pándavas, and when he was midway between them and the Kauravas, he turned round and said with a loud voice to the army of the Kauravas :—"O my friends, whoever wishes well to our cause, let him come over and join us." At these words Yuyutsu, who was a half brother of Duryodhana, deserted his own party and presented himself to Yudhishthira, and said :—"If you will take me by the hand, and promote me, I will engage myself in your service." Yudhishthira answered :—"Come then, I pray you, and I will regard you as one of my own brethren." Then Yuyutsu came out with all his followers from amongst the Kauravas, and he ordered his drums to beat, and cried out :—"I am going over to the army of the Pándavas ; so let him who desires to hinder me come forth and fight me." But no man came out to oppose him. So Yuyutsu went over and presented himself in due form to Yudhishthira ; and the Pándavas and all their army were much rejoiced, and beat their drums in joy ; and Yudhishthira took off the coat of mail from his own body, and had it put upon Yuyutsu, and he called for another cuirass for himself.

Bhíshma and Drona excuse themselves from fighting for the Pándavas.

Yuyutsu, half brother of Duryodhana, goes over to the Pándavas.

Joy of the Pándavas.

The apparently mythical character of the foregoing incidents may now be briefly indicated. The strange story of the visit paid by Yudhishthira to Bhíshma and Drona on the very morning of the battle, and his Pharisaical request that they would permit him to fight the Kauravas, evidently has its origin in the abject submission to elders and preceptors which is so rigidly enforced by Brahmanical law. The proceedings of Bhíshma and Drona are equally forced and artificial. Their open declaration that they would have fought on the side of the Pándavas had they not eaten the bread and salt of the Maháraja, is not only improbable, but inconsist-

Mythical character of the foregoing incidents.

The story of Yudhishthira's requests referable to the later Brahmanical period.

Improbability of Bhíshma and Drona's professed partiality for the Pándavas.

ent with the post held by Bhíshma as Generalissimo of the allied armies of the Kauravas, and the esteem and respect in which both were held by the sons of Dhritaráshtra. At the same time such a declaration is perfectly in accordance with the mythical speeches said to have been delivered by those warriors at the Council held at Hastinápur to receive Krishna as an ambassador from the Pándavas. Accordingly it seems highly probable that the incident has been introduced to harmonize the violent partisanship which they exhibited at the Council in favour of the Pándavas, with the fact that they were prepared to fight to the death in behalf of the Kauravas. The desertion of Yuyutsu from the Kauravas to the Pándavas is somewhat dubious. It may be either an actual fact, or a mythical interpolation. He is said to have been a son of the Maháraja, but only a half-brother to the Kauravas; and it is easy to conceive of a jealousy between the half-brothers which may have led to the desertion of Yuyutsu on such an occasion. At the same time, the existence of Yuyutsu is doubtful. The blind Maháraja is not likely to have had a son by any woman save his wife Gándhári. Moreover, as all the Kauravas are said to have been ultimately slain upon the field of battle, the Maháraja would have been doomed to the fate, so terrible in the eyes of a Hindú, of dying without leaving a son behind him. The introduction of Yuyutsu as a son by another mother, and the preservation of his life by a timely desertion, saved the Maháraja from so dire a calamity.

Introduced to harmonize with the speeches they are said to have delivered at Krishna's embassy.

Dubious authenticity of the desertion of Yuyutsu.

The story of the commencement of the battle, and the combats which ensued on the first day of the war, may now be related as follows:—

First day of the war.

Battle between Bhíshma and Bhíma, and their respective armies.

Now after Yudhishthira had returned to the army of the Pándavas, Bhíshma advanced with the troops of the Kauravas, and Bhíma marched out from amongst the Pándavas to confront him. And Bhíshma blew his war-shell which sounded like the roar of a lion. And Krishna and Arjuna sounded their shells in reply, standing in a huge chariot drawn by white horses; for Krishna drove the chariot of Arjuna on all the days of the war. At that moment there was a mighty uproar throughout the plain; and the air was filled with the beating of drums and the sounding of war-shells; and the men shouted, and the elephants roared, and the horses neighed, so that the earth and air resounded with a clangour which seemed to reach the sky. Then Bhíma cried out with a voice of thunder, louder than all the other noises; and the Kauravas were deafened at his cries, and were as fearful as children who had seen a demon; and they

Character of the battle.

hurled a shower of darts at him. Then Duryodhana advanced with ten of his brethren, and they shot their arrows at Bhíma and his soldiers, and thus the battle commenced; and the shouting of the combatants, and the gleaming of the cuirasses, and the flashing of the swords and spears, were like a storm of thunder and lightning. And the other Pándavas came out to help Bhíma, and there was as good a battle among them as has ever been seen or heard, whilst the dust dimmed the light of the sun, and the sword-strokes fell like heavy rain upon a mountain. And

Single combats.

Yudhishthira fought Sálya, and Dhrishta-dyumna fought Drona, and Drupada fought Jayadratha, and there were very many other single combats between renowned warriors whose names need not be declared. And they fought fairly for about an hour or two, each man against his own foe, and those who were mounted fought against those who were mounted, and those who were on foot against those who

Disregard of the rules of fighting.

were on foot; but then, like drunken Asuras, they forgot all the laws of fair fighting, and fell to in great confusion.

Combat between the youthful Abhimanyu and the patriarch Bhishma.

And Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, seeing that the battle was going against the Pándavas, went out against Bhíshma, and fought with great valour; and he cut down the ensign on

Bhíshma's chariot, and passed on and killed some and wounded many; and as he was returning, many darts were thrown at him, but he regarded them as so many drops of water; and Bhíshma bestowed great praise upon Abhimanyu, and said that of all the heroes he had ever known, he had never before seen a youth, whose age was only sixteen years, perform such prodigies of valour. And Uttar, son of Raja Viráta, was mounted on an elephant, and fought against Sálya; and his elephant overturned Sálya's chariot with his trunk, and Sálya fell to the ground; but Sálya rose up and discharged an arrow at Uttar, who thereupon fell senseless from the elephant, and was carried off by his father's people; and Sálya slew the elephant, and it fell to the ground like a tower. Then Bhíshma charged the soldiers of the Pándavas and made great havoc, but Arjuna went out against him; and Bhíshma attacked Arjuna first, and the two fought together for a long while, until the sun set and the drums beat to quarters, and the first day of the great war of Bhárata was fully over.

Praises bestowed by Bhíshma upon the prowess of Abhimanyu.

Combat between Uttar and Sálya.

Combat between Bhíshma and Arjuna.

The foregoing account of the first day of the war of Bhárata is followed in the Mahá Bhárata by a dialogue between Yudhishthira and Krishna, which is both puerile and mythical. The language is poor and the matter contemptible, whilst it seems to have been inserted for the sole purpose of associating Krishna with the war. As, however, it may serve as a fair specimen of the many dialogues which are introduced into the story, it may be reproduced here, as follows:—

Mythical dialogue between Yudhishthira and Krishna.

Now when it was night, Yudhishthira went to the lodgings of Krishna, together with his brethren, and Dhrishta-dyumna, and other warriors; and he said to him:—"You have seen, O Krishna, how Bhíshma has fought this day, and how in his old age he so handled our army, that had not Arjuna stood out against him we should have been wholly discomfited: These people of mine compared with

Yudhishthira complains of the havoc committed by Bhíshma, and proposes retiring.

Bhíshma are like moths around a lighted lamp; and I believe it would be better for me to dismiss them all, and retire to the jungle, or step aside and slay myself." Krishna answered:—"O Raja, why do you despair so soon, when you have so many valiant brethren, and such famous warriors on your side? What if Bhíshma did make havoc in your army, such is the nature of war, and a tiger does not fall back at the first rebuff: Moreover, towards evening time Arjuna made equal havoc amongst the Kauravas: Besides, no army ought to despair which has Dhrishta-dyumna in command." And Dhrishta-dyumna was much pleased at the words of Krishna, and the spirit of Yudhishthira was revived; so they all took leave of Krishna and returned to their own quarters.

Consoled by the remonstrances of Krishna, who dwells on the prowess of Arjuna and Dhrishta-dyumna.

Narrative of the war from the second to the tenth day.

The narrative of the war from the second to the tenth day contains some curious incidents, but demands no preliminary explanation. The story may be accordingly related as follows:—

Second day of the war.

Now on the morning of the second day, the two armies appeared again upon the plain in battle array; and Duryodhana commended the care which the Kauravas had taken of Bhíshma on the preceding day, and desired that they would now be equally mindful. Then Bhíshma and the Kauravas rushed upon their enemy, and at the first onset they drove the Pándavas back; and Arjuna seeing this, requested Krishna, who was his charioteer, to drive him against Bhíshma. And Duryodhana reproached Bhíshma, in that he had quarrelled with Karna, who was the only warrior in the world who was fitted to oppose Arjuna. And Bhíshma replied:—"Shame be upon me for being a Kshatriya, for however reluctant I may be, I am compelled by honour to fight my beloved Arjuna." And he immediately set out to do battle with Arjuna, and the two heroes fought and wounded each other. Meanwhile Dhrishta-dyumna was engaged in a hard contest with Drona. At this moment Bhíma came up and was stopped by the Raja of Magadhá, and hemmed in by the people of the Raja; and Bhíma took

The Pándavas repulsed by Bhíshma, but rallied by Arjuna.

Bhíshma reluctantly engages with Arjuna.

Bhíma attacked by the Raja of Magadhá and his army.

his mace and struck about him in all directions, and at every stroke he killed several elephants, and such a battle took place between them as was fought in olden time between Indra and the Asuras. And the son of the Raja of Magadhá came up and killed Bhíma's charioteer and his four horses, and Bhíma slew him with one blow of his mace. Then the Raja of Magadhá, to revenge the death of his son, drove his elephant at Bhíma, who was now without horses or driver; and Bhíma leaped down from his chariot, and rushed forward with his sword, when another son of the Raja of Magadhá interposed with his elephant; and Bhíma put his hands upon the tusks of the elephant and vaulted upon his back, and cut off the head of the young man and threw it at the feet of his father. And the Raja of Magadhá almost died with grief at the death of both his sons, and had a fierce battle with Bhíma; but at length Bhíma lifted up his great mace and slew both the Raja and his elephant at a single blow. Then the Raja's troops fell upon Bhíma, but he blew the shell of victory, and his own army heard it and came to his rescue; and the Kauravas were greatly troubled when they heard that the Raja of Magadhá and his two sons were amongst the slain.

Slays a son of the Raja of Magadhá.

Vaults on an elephant and slays a second son.

Slays the Raja and his elephant at a single blow.

After this there was a great battle between Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, and Lakshmana, a son of Duryodhana. The two youths fought bravely together, and Abhimanyu gained the victory and slew the son of Duryodhana. And when Duryodhana saw that his son was dead, he flew with many of his Rajas to attack Abhimanyu, and the Pándavas cried out:—"They are murdering Abhimanyu by force of numbers." And Arjuna heard these words, and pounced like a falcon upon Duryodhana and all his forces; and all the Rajas fled at the very sound of his chariot, and left their arms, and their horses, and their elephants, and everything else behind them, for there was no one amongst them who would face Arjuna. And Duryodhana called upon them by name to rally round him, but no one heeded his words, and Duryodhana finding himself alone was compelled to fly in like manner. So Arjuna gained the victory, and he and

Abhimanyu slays a son of Duryodhana.

Attacked by Duryodhana, and rescued by Arjuna.

Flight of all the Rajas at the sound of Arjuna's chariot.

Krishna blew their shells in triumph. Meantime the wise Bhíshma perceived the disastrous condition of his army, and was much astonished, and he said to Drona:—"See, worthy preceptor, how Arjuna is committing fearful havoc: He is dreadful as Yama, and I see no chance of defeating him this day; and our own army is so shattered that we cannot lead them against the Pándavas, who the more they fight seem to grow the stronger: The gods are against us; our warriors are weary and panic-stricken; and it would be unwise to expose them this day to another conflict: So pass the order for leaving the field, and direct that all may be ready in the morning for to-morrow's battle." Then Drona gave the order, and the Kauravas returned to their camp with sad hearts. But on that day the Pándavas had done mighty things, and they and their troops returned to their quarters in great joy and glory; and so that night passed away.

Alarm of Bhíshma at the havoc created by Arjuna.

Successes of the Pándavas.

On the morning of the third day the Pándavas drew up their army in the form of a half-moon, and made such a charge that they fell at once on the front and two flanks of the Kauravas. And they dashed on pell-mell and broke the enemy's line and threw it into disorder, and then re-formed themselves and charged again; and in the confusion charioteers and horsemen charged the footmen contrary to rule, and slew them with darts on which they had inscribed their own names; but order was soon restored by Bhíshma and Arjuna, and they then fought their equals only, as had been agreed upon at the beginning of the war. The slaughter on this day was terrible, and the plain was strewed with heaps of dead, and weapons of every description, and bodies without heads, and horses without riders; and the dust was laid with rivers of blood; and the wounded writhed about in all directions and filled the air with their piercing shrieks and melancholy cries; and still as they fell and rose they struggled in combat with each other; and from the excess of bloodshed and carnage that day the battle was called Maharadra. Even the bodies of those who were dead rose up without their heads and fought each other; and when the people saw this they saw it was an omen that the whole of

Third day of the war.

Tremendous charge of the Pándavas in the form of a half-moon.

Terrible slaughter.

Cries of the wounded.

Dead men rise without heads and fight each other.

the living would be slain. Then the great Chieftains of the Kauravas fell upon the Pándavas, and the battle raged furiously, and was fearful to behold; for when the swords of the warriors were blunted and their arrows spent, they tore up trees by the roots and slew each other with them, or flew at each other with their clenched fists, and kicked, and wrestled, and tore each other with their teeth and nails. And the Pándavas drove back the Kauravas, and the Kauravas in their flight resembled the rushing of the waters at the new and full moon.

The warriors fight with their fists, feet, teeth, and nails.

Repulse of the Kauravas.

Duryodhana now saw that his forces were being routed, and he went to Bhíshma and complained of his indifference to the slaughter of the Kauravas, and begged that he would exert himself to the utmost to defeat the Pándavas. At these words the eyes of Bhíshma became red with wrath, but he sounded the shells and trumpets, and the Kauravas responded to the call; and the battle raged again more furiously than before, and Bhíshma drove the army of the Pándavas before him, and killed very many. But Arjuna requested Krishna to drive him against Bhíshma, and the Pándavas turned back and fought desperately; and after a long time the Kauravas were defeated, and retired to their own quarters; and the Pándavas blew the shell of victory and returned in triumph to their camp, and bestowed great praises upon Arjuna, and thus ended the third day of the battle.

Duryodhana complains of the indifference of Bhíshma.

Bhíshma renews the battle, but the Kauravas are driven back by Arjuna.

And now the war raged every day from the fourth to the ninth day, and sometimes the Chieftains fought single combats, and sometimes the armies fought together pell-mell; but though very many were killed on either side, yet the issue was as far off as ever, and the Pándavas were still unconquered, whilst the Kauravas were much disheartened at their ill success. On the evening of the ninth day, when the Kauravas had returned to their quarters, Duryodhana, Sakuni, Duhsásana, and Karna held a consultation together about their disasters; and Duryodhana said:—"O warriors, why is it that whilst we have Bhíshma, and Drona, and Kripa, and Sálya on our side, we are still unable to conquer

The war rages from the fourth to the ninth day.

Kauravas disheartened at not conquering the Pándavas.

Duryodhana complains to his Chieftains of his want of success

the Pándavas? Why should I be defeated every day, and my army decrease in numbers, whilst the Pándavas are still alive? Let me know, I pray you, how we can succeed in destroying our enemies?" Karna replied:—"O Raja, cast aside your grief! Arrange that Bhíshma withdraws from the fight, so that I may put on my armour and do battle upon the plain, and I swear to you that I will clear the earth of the Pándavas."

Karna engages to slay the Pándavas if Bhíshma will retire from the command.

So Duryodhana went to the tent of Bhíshma and said:—"If you will defeat the Pándavas according to your promise, it will be well; but if you are desirous of showing mercy to the Pándavas, then do you lay aside your arms and permit Karna to destroy my enemies."

Duryodhana proposes to Bhíshma that he should retire.

When Bhíshma heard this reproachful language from Duryodhana he was touched to the heart, and uttered not a word; but presently he exclaimed, with a voice of thunder:—"O Raja, I am doing my utmost, and disregarding my own life, in order to serve you: Why then do you still reproach me with cruel words! On the morrow however you shall either behold me dead upon the field, or you shall be entirely freed from your enemies." So saying he dismissed Duryodhana and retired to his own couch.

Bhíshma's wrath.

Bhíshma engages to defeat the Pándavas on the tenth day or perish upon the field.

Next morning, being the tenth day of the war, Duryodhana told all his Chieftains that Bhíshma had resolved to slay the Pándavas or to fall by their hands. Then the armies were marshalled upon the plain, and Bhíshma proceeded to the front of his army; and challenged Arjuna to battle; and there was a terrible conflict between Bhíshma and Arjuna which lasted many hours, and all the warriors on either side ceased their combats in order that they might look on. At last after much fighting Bhíshma received a mortal wound; and he fell from his chariot upon the ground, and Arjuna went up to him and brought him water, and all the warriors on either side paid homage to the dying patriarch. But Bhíshma did not give up the ghost, but lay on the ground many days, and a guard was set upon him by Raja Duryodhana until he died.

Tenth day of the war.

Terrible conflict between Bhíshma and Arjuna.

Bhíshma mortally wounded.

The foregoing selections from the narrative of

Review of the first ten days of the war.

the first ten days of the war are sufficient to illustrate the desultory character of the fighting; and here it should be remarked that however popular some of the scenes appear to be, such as the mythical contest between Bhíma and the Raja of Magadhá and his sons, the onslaught of Arjuna, and the great charge of the army of the Pándavas in the form of a half-moon, still the interest centres in the single combat between Bhíshma and Arjuna, in which the former was slain. The legend of this combat undoubtedly referred to a real event; but in the Mahá Bhárata, the narrative is so overloaded with supernatural details, introduced for the purpose of explaining away the unseemly character of the contest between the old patriarch and his youthful kinsman, that it will be sufficient to accept the bare fact that the two warriors engaged in several single combats, and that ultimately Bhíshma was slain. One point, however, in these mythical additions appears to be worthy of notice, namely, the palpable effort to Brahmanize the character of Bhíshma. In what appears to be the original tradition Bhíshma is represented as a loyal and venerated patriarch, who had withdrawn his claim to the Raj in order to gratify his father, and had subsequently educated the fathers of the Kauravas and Pándavas for the throne, and trained them in the use of arms. The Brahmanical compilers, however, seem to have been desirous of reproducing so celebrated a hero in a character more adapted to their own religious ideas; and consequently, by the bold introduction of fabulous matter, they have actually succeeded, from a Hindú point of view, in transforming the rude and honest veteran into a pious ascetic and moral

Interest centres in the single combat between Bhíshma and Arjuna.

Singular effort to Brahmanize the character of Bhíshma.

teacher. Bhíshma is said to have been so thickly pierced in every part of his body by the arrows of Arjuna, that when he fell mortally wounded from his chariot, he rested as it were upon the points of the arrows. A pillow for his head was formed by three more arrows. In this condition he lay in a state of consciousness for many weeks, having received from his father the miraculous power of fixing the hour when he should die. In the first instance he called for Duryodhana, and in a lengthy address advised him before it was too late to restore half of the Raj to the Pándavas; and subsequently tried to persuade Karna to desert Duryodhana and espouse the cause of the Pándavas. Having failed in both cases, he continued to lie on his arrowy couch, until long after the war was over, when just before giving up the ghost he took the opportunity of delivering to Yudhishthira a prolix discourse on the duties of kings.[2] Such startling incongruities as these are only valuable as illustrating the character of the interpolations, which the Brahmanical compilers have introduced into the national Epic; but the Brahmanical teaching involved in the discourses will be brought under discussion in dealing with the religious ideas which prevailed at a later age.

Mythical story that Bhíshma lay for many days upon a couch formed of arrow heads, and then delivered some moral and religious discourses.

The second period in the progress of the war comprises the history of the five days during which

2nd, Drona's command—five days.

[2] Another preposterous myth connected with the death of Bhíshma may be recorded in a note. He is said to have received the mortal wound not from Arjuna, but from a warrior named Sikhandin, who was a younger son of Raja Drupada. In a previous birth Sikhandin is said to have been a female named Ambá, and was indeed the elder daughter of the Raja of Kási whom Bhíshma had carried away to be the wife of his half-brother Vichitra-virya. She had perished in the jungle, but before her death she had been assured by Paraśu Ráma, that she should become a man in a future birth, and cause the death of Bhíshma, who had been the author of all her misfortunes. *See page 53.*

the command was held by the preceptor Drona, who succeeded Bhíshma as Generalissimo of the Kauravas. At this stage of the contest the single combats became more prominent; and it is evident that in the original tradition it was in a great measure these combats that decided the fortunes of the war. The narrative of Drona's command is characterized by three important incidents:—

Prominence of single combats.

Three important incidents in the history of Drona's command.

1st, The attempts of Drona and the Kauravas to take Yudhishthira prisoner.

2nd, The death of Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, and the tragical circumstances which followed it.

3rd, The death of Drona, who was slain in a single combat with Dhrishta-dyumna, the Generalissimo of the Pándavas.

These incidents will call for remark hereafter, but they may first be related as follows:—

Election of Drona.

Now it was on the tenth day of his command that Bhíshma was mortally wounded; and Duryodhana, and his brethren, and all his allies returned to the camp very mournful; and they elected Drona to take the command in the room of Bhíshma.

Eleventh day of the war and first of Drona's command.

Efforts of Drona to take Yudhishthira prisoner.

Frustrated by Krishna and Arjuna.

And on the morrow, which was the first day of Drona's command, and the eleventh of the war, Drona promised Duryodhana that he would take Yudhishthira prisoner; but he could not do as he had desired, for Krishna and Arjuna were ever on the alert to protect Yudhishthira. And when it was evening, Drona said to Duryodhana:—"I cannot deliver Yudhishthira into your hands whilst Krishna and Arjuna are his keepers; but if you can draw away Arjuna from the field, I can take Yudhishthira alive."

Susarman and his four brethren send a challenge to Arjuna.

Then Susarman, Raja of Trigarta, said to Duryodhana:—"I and my four brethren will send a challenge to Arjuna on the morrow to fight us at some place far away from Yudhishthira; and it is certain that he will accept the challenge

without caring for our superior numbers." And Duryodhana approved of the plot, and Susarman and his brethren took an oath that while life remained they would not turn their backs against Arjuna; and they kindled a fire and adjured it to bear witness to their sincerity. So Susarman despatched a challenge to Arjuna to come out to battle on the twelfth day of the war; and Arjuna acquainted Yudhishthira with the challenge which he had received. And Yudhishthira said:—"This is a plot to separate you from me, that Drona may take me prisoner according to his promise." But Arjuna replied:—"I am bound not to refuse any challenge, nor to dispute about the place proposed, nor to chaffer about superior numbers." So Arjuna returned answer that he accepted the challenge.

Arjuna accepts the challenge, contrary to the advice of Yudhishthira.

Twelfth day of the war and second of Drona's command.

When the morning of the second day of Drona's command and twelfth day of the war had fully come, both armies were put in battle-array; and Arjuna, having obtained the permission of Yudhishthira, went to the place appointed by Susarman, and found the brethren there, and sounded his shell. And the battle lasted some time, but Arjuna obtained the victory over all his enemies, and put them to flight, and then taunted Susarman and his brethren with the oath they had taken not to turn their backs upon him. Meanwhile, Drona advanced to take Yudhishthira prisoner, and Yudhishthira retreated in great alarm; and being much pressed, he mounted a fleet horse and galloped out of sight; for it is no shame for a Kshatriya to fly away from a Brâhman. And Duryodhana and Karna reproached Drona, for having permitted Yudhishthira to escape out of his hands.

Arjuna defeats Susarman and his brethren.

Yudhishthira narrowly escapes being taken prisoner by Drona.

Thirteenth day of the war and third of Drona's command.

On the third day of Drona's command, and thirteenth day of the war, Susarman and his four brethren sent a second challenge to Arjuna to fight in the southern quarter of the plain, and Arjuna again accepted the challenge. Meantime Drona, who was very skilful in the art of war, drew up his army in the form of a spider's web; so that if a Pándava made a charge, and got within the enemy's lines, he would be thereupon surrounded by warriors and unable

Arjuna fights Susarman a second time.

Drona draws up the Kauravas in the form of a spider's web.

to make his escape. And when the Pándavas saw their enemies arranged in this manner, they were astonished, and said:—"As Arjuna has gone out to fight Susarman and his brethren, we are unable to draw up an army in the same array as the Kauravas." So the Pándavas marshalled themselves in the best form that they were able, and placed Bhíma in their van, and their other Captains here and there. Then Yudhishthira said to his principal warriors:—"The Kauravas have placed themselves in an array which no one understands save Arjuna and Krishna; so until they return it will be necessary that some who are here should fight against them, lest it should be said that without Arjuna and Krishna we are no match for the Kauravas." And there was present the young and heroic Abhimanyu, who was only sixteen years of age; and he was the son of Arjuna, and had been married to Uttará, the daughter of Raja Viráta. And Yudhishthira said to Abhimanyu:—"A son is the essence of his father, and a lion's cub has the valour and fierceness of the lion; so do you charge the Kauravas and break this spider's web of theirs." Then Abhimanyu kissed the feet of Yudhishthira, and said:—"You desire me to pass through this impenetrable spider's web, but I cannot consent to take the lead in any dangerous undertaking." Then Yudhishthira said:—"I only ask you to enter the spider's web, and make a passage for us: We will follow immediately upon your heels: If you can once make an opening it will never close; and Bhíma and others of our army will take care to profit by your skill." Abhimanyu replied:—"O reverend Sire, I shall enter the impenetrable spider's web, as an insect falls upon a fire: But unless I kill one of my enemies, I am not the son of Subhadrá; and if, seated upon my chariot, I do not kill all the Kshatriyas who are here, I will never acknowledge myself to be the son of Arjuna." Abhimanyu then ordered his charioteer to drive on, and he entered the ranks of the enemy, and challenged any warrior to battle; and the Kauravas caught him in their midst like a whirlwind; and Abhimanyu fought manfully, and he cut down all who came before him; but he was as a

Pándavas unable to oppose the spider's web.

Yudhishthira commands Abhimanyu to charge the spider's web.

Abhimanyu drives his chariot into the enemies' ranks, and performs prodigies of valour.

single man against all the Kauravas. Meanwhile the Pándavas saw that the boy was being hemmed in, and they pursued him closely to deliver him; but the wicked Jayadratha saw what they were striving to do, and the fire of enmity was in his heart, for the humiliation he had received after carrying away Draupadí. And Jayadratha threw himself into the way of the Pándavas, so that they could not pass him and rescue Abhimanyu. At this time Duhsásana, and his son, and four other warriors surrounded the young Abhimanyu, and thought to slay him; but he still withstood them all. At last his foot slipped, and just as he was recovering himself, the son of Duhsásana struck him on the head with his mace and dashed out his brains; and he died that same moment as pure as if he had never been born. And he was very young and very handsome, and he left the world with such a display of valour as no man has ever seen; and such sweetness and beauty appeared upon his dead body, that all who saw him were astonished at his comeliness, and they lamented him very sore. And when Yudhishthira heard that Abhimanyu was dead, he rushed to the spot and found him lying on the earth covered with wounds as befits a hero; and he could not endure the sight, but threw himself upon the ground, weeping and wailing, and casting dust upon his head; for he knew that it was by his command that Abhimanyu had gone upon this service. And all his friends and all the enemies of the Kauravas alike condemned the manner of the death of Abhimanyu, for they said it was a cowardly thing for six experienced Chieftains to fall upon such a stripling.

Pándavas prevented by Jayadratha from rescuing Abhimanyu.

Abhimanyu overpowered by six warriors and slain.

Extreme beauty and prowess of Abhimanyu.

Profound grief of Yudhishthira.

General outcry against the cowardly Chieftains who slew Abhimanyu.

Now as Arjuna was returning from fighting Susarman, he saw many evil omens, and he showed them to Krishna; and when they returned to their quarters, Yudhishthira told him all that had happened to his son Abhimanyu; how that Abhimanyu had been beset by six heroes, and had fallen with the utmost glory, and how Jayadratha had blocked up the way and prevented the Pándavas from coming to the rescue; but he did not say that he had commanded Abhimanyu to charge the Kauravas. When Arjuna heard that his

Arjuna's overpowering grief at hearing of the death of Abhimanyu.

Vows to slay Jayadratha before sunset on the morrow.

son was slain, his grief was beyond all bounds, and he fell down like one dead; and when he recovered himself he swore that he would take the life of Jayadratha before the setting of the morrow's sun, or else enter the funeral pile; but he was a changed man under the burden of his grief, and the perspiration ran down his face heavily. Then Krishna said:—"Your son has perished so gloriously that his fame will endure for ever, and it might be said that he is still alive: Children, like worldly goods, are given to us by God, and he can resume them at his own pleasure." In this manner Krishna in some degree consoled Arjuna; and he then went off to comfort Subhadrá, the mother of the young man; and he said to her:—"How happy is the mother whose son has met with so glorious a destiny!" Then he spoke in like manner to the young widow Uttará, who was about to become a mother; and after a while he administered some consolation to them, for they had given themselves up to despair. He then dismissed all the Rajas who had come to console Arjuna, saying:—"It is now night, and the morrow is a great day for us, and you should not lose a moment of sleep that you can possibly secure." So the Rajas went to their several quarters, and Krishna was left alone with Arjuna; and he took him by the hand, and led him in, and seated him, and he laid many topics of consolation before him; for he would not leave him alone lest he should rush out in despair and fall madly upon the enemy in the night time; but he ordered all the people about him to continue armed and on the watch throughout the whole night. And when it was midnight Krishna called to his charioteer, and acquainted him with the vow that Arjuna had made to slay Jayadratha, and he ordered him to make ready his chariot at early morn that he might drive Arjuna to the battle.

Krishna consoles Arjuna.

Comforts Subhadrá and Uttará, the mother and widow of Abhimanyu.

His touching attendance upon Arjuna throughout the night.

Orders his chariot at early morn to drive Arjuna against Jayadratha.

Meanwhile a spy, that was in the camp of the Pándavas, had gone to Jayadratha and told him of the vow that Arjuna had made. And Jayadratha was sore afraid, and at night time he went to Raja Duryodhana, and besought him for leave to depart; and Duryodhana took him to Drona, and

Cowardly attempt of Jayadratha to withdraw.

told all his story. But Drona made light of the matter, and said:—"There are many great warriors here who can protect Jayadratha; and on the morrow I will so arrange the army that Arjuna cannot come near him, and I will station him in the rear of the army." So Jayadratha was satisfied and returned to his own quarters.

Fourteenth day of the war and fourth of Drona's command.

Fierce struggle of Arjuna, Sátyaki, and Bhima to reach Jayadratha.

Now when the morning had dawned of the fourth day of Drona's command, and fourteenth day of the war, Arjuna went out to fight Jayadratha, and Sátyaki and Bhíma went with him; but Duryodhana kept them at bay; and these four Chieftains were like four gamblers, and Jayadratha was their stake. And Karna came up and fought Bhíma, and a warrior, whose name was Bhurisrava, fought against Sátyaki.

Combat between Sátyaki and Bhurisrava.

And the battle between Bhurisrava and Sátyaki was very hot, and when their weapons were all exhausted they came to close quarters after the manner of wrestlers. And Bhurisrava caught Sátyaki by the hair of his head, and kicked him on his breast, and dragged him along the ground, and made ready to cut off his head. Now Sátyaki was the kinsman of Krishna, and Krishna seeing that his kinsman was about to be slain, turned to Arjuna and said:—"We must hasten and release Sátyaki." So Arjuna threw a weapon which cut off the arms of Bhurisrava, and saved the life of Sátyaki. Then Bhurisrava opened his mouth in abuse of Krishna and Arjuna, and said:—"The Pándavas once were famous for fair fighting, but it is foul play that whilst I am engaged with my own antagonist, you should come up and wound me unawares: Will Yudhishthira praise you for such conduct, or is it Yudhishthira, or Indra, or Bráhma who has given you such lessons in war?" Arjuna answered:—"War is altogether treachery and deceit, and the whole business of it is to get the better of one's enemy: Now Sátyaki is one of our side, and you had seized him by the hair, and were dragging him along the ground, and the injury was as if it was done to myself; and when you were going to cut off his head, where would have been any friendship in the world if I had not rescued him from your hands?" But all the Kauravas bitterly reproached Arjuna for throw-

Bhurisrava conquers Sátyaki and prepares to cut off his head.

Krishna requests Arjuna to interfere.

Arjuna cuts off the arms of Bhurisrava.

Bhurisrava abuses Arjuna for interfering.

Arjuna's defence.

All the Kauravas reproach Arjuna.

ing a weapon at a man with whom he was not in conflict; and Arjuna bade them look to themselves, who had sent six of their greatest warriors to murder his son Abhimanyu, who was a mere stripling and had done no harm. Meanwhile, Bhurisrava in consequence of his wound had let his weapons fall to the ground, and prepared himself for death; and Arjuna said to him:—"Since it is I who have caused your death, I now send you to the assembly of Indra; so go thither until you are purified from all your sins." At this time Sátyaki, who had been delivered from the hands of Bhurisrava, approached him in great anger; and notwithstanding all that Krishna and Arjuna could say to prevent his falling upon a dying man, he buffeted and kicked Bhurisrava, and then he cut off his head.

Arjuna's retort respecting the cowardly murder of his own son.

Sátyaki beheads Bhurisrava.

When Sátyaki had thus slain his enemy, Arjuna went with him and Bhíma to fight against Jayadratha; and the day was far spent, and Duryodhana sent many warriors to fight against them, so that the sun might set without the fulfilment of the vow, and Arjuna be compelled to enter the fire. And Arjuna fought desperately and defeated many Chieftains of high renown; and at last he found Jayadratha, and engaged with him in battle. And Jayadratha struggled with all his might, for the sun was going down in the west; and he and Arjuna came to kicks and buffets, and Arjuna at last threw him upon the ground, and cut off his head only a moment before the setting of the sun.

Desperate conflict between Arjuna and Jayadratha.

Arjuna beheads Jayadratha just before sunset.

Then Bhíma, when he saw the head of Jayadratha, set up a loud shout of triumph; and the hearts of the Kauravas were filled with sorrow, whilst the Pándavas rejoiced with exceeding joy. And the sun set in the heavens, but the warriors would not stay the battle in the evening as they had done on all the previous days of the war, but they fought on and cared not for food or sleep; and there was much slaughter, for every man was in great wrath. And when the darkness came on they fought at hazard, not knowing friend from foe. And the night became terrible beyond all telling; fathers slew their sons and sons their fathers, and they cut and hewed like men that were mad.

Exultation of the Pándavas and grief of the Kauravas.

Battle continued through out the night.

Frightful confusion in the darkness.

Then Yudhishthira, seeing that the darkness was filling the plain with unutterable horror, ordered many lighted torches to be brought; and every man took a torch and fought with it in his hand, and ten torches were fastened to every chariot. And the whole plain of Kurukshetra was as light as day; and the golden cuirasses of the Rajas were as radiant as the sun; and the jewels on their arms and hands sparkled in the glare, and the swords and spears flashed like lightning. And they threw large stones at each other, and hurled chariot-wheels; and when a man threw his enemy down he cut off his head, and carried it in his hand; and their mouths were stained with blood as they thirsted for the blood of each other, and the plain was filled with dead corpses. And the son of Bhíma, by his Asura wife, was amongst the slain.

Plain of Kurukshetra lit up by torches.

Battle scenes by torchlight.

And when it was about midnight, and sleep was overpowering the eyes of all those who remained alive, Arjuna cried out with a loud voice that the battle should cease for a while, and that all men should rest and sleep. Then all the warriors on either side rejoiced at the words of Arjuna; and the rider of the elephant laid his head upon his elephant, and the horseman laid his head upon his horse, and for a brief space they were in a deep slumber; but presently the moon arose, and both armies were awakened and again begirt themselves for shedding each other's blood. Then Duryodhana reproached Drona, inasmuch as he had not murdered the Pándavas whilst they were sleeping; but Drona objected to the wicked perfidy, and said that Arjuna could never be taken thus. And the battle raged furiously, and Yudhishthira was sorely wounded, and the Rajas Viráta and Drupada were both defeated by Drona, and Drona cut off their heads upon the plain. Now the Pándavas were nearly vanquished, for thousands of their warriors were slain; but Dhrishta-dyumna, the Generalissimo of the Pándavas, vowed to avenge the death of his father Drupada, and took an oath that he would not drink water until he should have slain Drona. Then Bhíma said to Dhrishta-dyumna:—"You are too young a warrior to cope

Short interval of slumber at midnight.

Renewal of the battle by moonlight.

The battle goes against the Pándavas.

Vow of Dhrishta-dyumna to slay Drona.

Bhíma fights Drona until sunrise.

with such an experienced soldier as Drona, so let me engage him first so as to tire him, and then do you come up and finish him." And Bhíma fought with Drona until the rising of the sun, and then Dhrishta-dyumna fought against Drona until it was mid-day, but neither could prevail against him; but at this moment it was falsely told Drona that his son Aswatthâma was dead; and Drona laid down his arms, and Dhrishta-dyumna rushed upon him and severed his head from his body. And Dhrishta-dyumna then took up the head of Drona, and threw it towards Duryodhana and the other Kauravas, saying:—"Take the head of him in whom you prided yourselves, and I will cut off all your heads in like manner."

Fifteenth day of the war and fifth of Drona's command.

Dhrishta-dyumna fights Drona.

Drona overcome by means of a lie.

Dhrishta-dyumna beheads Drona.

Then all the Pándavas rejoiced exceedingly, and Bhíma ran to Dhrishta-dyumna and embraced him, and kissed his hand and face, and said:—"To-morrow, when Karna also has lost his head, I will kiss and embrace you again." But all the Kauravas were very sorrowful when they beheld the head of Drona, and they were all disheartened, and like a flock without a shepherd; and they were in great despair, and said:—"The Pándavas have extinguished the light of us all." Then they all burst into tears and forsook the field of battle. At this time, Aswatthâma, not knowing that his father Drona had been slain, went to Raja Duryodhana, and asked him why he desisted from fighting; and when Aswatthâma heard all that had happened, he said:—"If I do not revenge the death of my father, and slay Dhrishta-dyumna, and all his kinsfolk, I am not the son of Drona: So long as I have breath will I make war against the Pándavas."

Rejoicings of the Pándavas.

Deep regret of the Kauravas at the death of Drona.

Vow of Aswatthâma to revenge the death of Drona.

The foregoing narrative of the five days of Drona's command comprises some of the most significant incidents in the history of the great war. Whilst it has been found impossible on all occasions to separate the mythical from the real, still the graphic pictures of barbarous warfare, and the terrible illustrations of the savage passion for re-

Review of the foregoing account of the five days of Drona's command.

venge, which are frequently presented to the imagination, throw a strong light upon the real character of this memorable conflict.

Yudhishthira represented as a coward.

The first point which demands consideration is the representation of Yudhishthira, not merely as a man of peace, but as an arrant coward. In the negotiations which preceded the war, he had offered to sacrifice so large a proportion of his own rights and those of his brothers as to excite the anger of Draupadí and the disapproval of Krishna. But in the foregoing narrative he exhibits a pusillanimity which is scarcely intelligible. When attacked by Drona he mounted a horse and galloped away; and such cowardice is excused on the ground that it was no shame for a Kshatriya to run away from a Bráhman. This assumption in favour of the Bráhmans is startling from its very audacity, and may be ascribed to the same Brahmanical compilers who would convert Drona into a Brahmanical Guru or Acharya. Again, when Drona had drawn up his army in dangerous array, Yudhishthira refrained from charging the enemy himself, and commanded his young nephew, the boy bridegroom of sixteen years of age, to make the desperate attempt; but he appears to have been so ashamed of his conduct on this occasion that when he was called upon to tell the sad story to Arjuna, he carefully suppressed the fact that he had himself ordered Abhimanyu to charge the "spider's web." How far this singular timidity formed a part of the real character of Yudhishthira, or how far it is the result of the effort of the Brahmanical compilers to represent him in the character of Dharma, must of course be open to question. Possibly Yudhishthira, who is elsewhere

Brahmanical reasons assigned for his cowardice.

treated as a model of goodness and wisdom, is intended as an apology for the unwarlike conduct of the Bráhmans themselves, or for the cowardice of some priest-ridden Raja, who had been brought under the thraldom of the Bráhmans.

Touching character of the story of Abhimanyu.

The story of the death of Abhimanyu, and the tragical incidents which followed, forms, perhaps, one of the most touching events in the history of the war. How far the details are mythical will be a matter of opinion; but the main story is painfully pathetic. The boy bridegroom had been cowardly overpowered and slaughtered after performing prodigies of valour; and the beauty and sweetness of his countenance in death excited the pity of all who beheld him. But the wrath of the spectators was excited not so much by the dastardly conduct of the six warriors who had surrounded the stripling, as by the malicious proceeding of Jayadratha, the ill-conditioned Raja who had endeavoured to carry off Draupadí in the jungle, and who on the present occasion obstructed the Pándavas in their efforts to rush to the rescue. Under such circumstances the vow of the bereaved father to take the life of Jayadratha becomes intelligible, and the details connected with the performance of the vow are such as might have been expected in an ancient tradition which has been more or less embellished by the bards. But there are one or two collateral scenes which are very suggestive. The combat between Bhurisrava and Sátyaki is fearfully savage. After a desperate struggle without weapons, Bhurisrava throws his enemy upon the ground, and drags him along by the hair, and then prepares to cut off his head. Arjuna interferes, contrary to the laws of

Savage character of the combat between Bhurisrava and Sátyaki.

war, and saves Sátyaki by mutilating Bhurisrava. Lastly, Sátyaki falls upon his wounded enemy, kicks and buffets him, and then cuts off his head. Such atrocious proceedings seem to have excited both armies to madness; and led to that desperate battle by torch-light which furnishes, perhaps, the most picturesque description of hand-to-hand carnage which can be found in the history of war.

Review of the death of Drona.

The death of Drona, the venerable preceptor of the Kauravas and Pándavas, was evidently regarded as a turning-point in the great struggle. He had nearly vanquished the Pándavas by the slaughter of their chief allies; but he in his turn was slain by the son of one of his victims. He had defeated and put to death his ancient enemy Drupada, the Raja with whom he had been at feud when he first entered the service of Maháraja Dhritaráshtra; and it is a curious circumstance that the Pándavas had originally aided their preceptor in revenging himself upon Drupada, and had subsequently taken the daughter of Drupada to wife. Dhrishta-dyumna, the son of Drupada, swore to revenge the death of his father, and did eventually succeed in beheading Drona, as Drona had beheaded Drupada. But in the Mahá Bhárata the story of the combat between Dhrishta-dyumna and Drona is complicated by mythical details, which have apparently a two-fold object in view; namely, first to represent Drona as a Bráhman, and a faithful worshipper of Vishnu; and, secondly, to cover or conceal a treacherous lie which seems to have been told by Yudhishthira. The outline of these mythical additions may be indicated in a few words, and may perhaps serve as a sample of much of the religious matter which has

Mythical details recorded in the Mahá Bhárata.

Extraordinary account of a lie inadvertently told by Yudhishthira.

been grafted upon the original tradition. The battle between Dhrishta-dyumna and Drona was fought with magical weapons, and gods and Rishis were amongst the spectators. Many armies came to the aid of Dhrishta-dyumna, but the martial skill of Drona, and his long and faithful worship of Vishnu, enabled him to resist every enemy. At length Krishna, somewhat inconsistently with his divine character, told Yudhishthira that if he would assure Drona that his son Aswatthâma was dead, the old warrior would immediately lay down his arms and become an easy prey. Yudhishthira, however, utterly refused to tell a lie, even to secure the death of so powerful an enemy. Krishna then endeavoured to overcome the difficulty by directing the Pándavas to slay an elephant which was named Aswatthâma; as by so doing the statement that Aswatthâma was dead would cease to be a lie. Bhíma accordingly killed the elephant, and then told Drona that Aswatthâma was dead. But Drona was convinced that Bhíma was telling a falsehood; and in his anger he slew ten thousand cavalry and twenty thousand infantry, and would have destroyed all the armies of the Pándavas, had he not been restrained by the gods and Rishis who reminded him that he was a Bráhman. Drona, however, was still disturbed by the idea that Aswatthâma might be dead, and accordingly asked Yudhishthira, who had never been known to tell a falsehood. Yudhishthira accordingly intended to say:—"Aswatthâma is dead; not indeed the man but the elephant." No sooner, however, had he uttered the first part of the sentence than Krishna and Arjuna sounded their war-shells with all their might, and Drona only

Krishna suggests the lie.

Krishna suggests a prevarication.

Manner in which Yudhishthira is said to have told a lie.

heard the words:—"Aswatthâma is dead!" At the same time Drona was assailed by evil omens. His left eye began to quiver, his left hand began to shake, his heart grew weak, and tears flowed from the eyes of his horse. He still, however, continued fighting until Bhíma again assured him that Aswatthâma was dead. Believing now that his son was really slain, he stripped himself of his arms, and sat upon the end of his chariot cross-legged like a Yogi. He then drew up all the breath of his body into a spot in the neighbourhood of his heart, and drove it into his head, upon which the top of his skull was burst open, and his soul escaped through the orifice like a ray of the sun. Dhrishta-dyumna then rushed upon the expiring body and cut off the head. The terrible story of the revenge of Aswatthâma for the slaughter of his father will appear hereafter.

Drona dies in the character of a Brâhman Yogi.

Escape of his soul through his skull.

By the death of Drona the Kauravas were once more deprived of their Generalissimo, and Karna was elected to succeed to the command. Karna only held this post for two days, namely, the sixteenth and seventeenth of the war; but within this brief period are crowded some of the most decisive events in the great struggle. The most important combats which took place during Karna's command were as follows:—

3rd, Karna's command—two days.

1st, The battle between Karna and Yudhishthira.

2nd, The battle between Bhíma and Duhsásana.

3rd, The crowning battle between Karna and Arjuna.

Three important combats.

The story of these incidents is as follows:—

Election of Karna to be Generalissimo of the Kauravas.

Sixteenth day of the war, and first of Karna's command.

Indecisive struggle.

Karna engages to slay Arjuna.

Seventeenth day of the war and second of Karna's command.

Karna desires that Sálya would drive his chariot.

Now Drona had been slain in the fifth day of his command, and on the fifteenth day of the war; and when it was evening the Kauravas assembled together and elected Karna to be their Generalissimo in the room of Drona. Next morning the Kauravas, commanded by Karna, again went out to battle on the plain of Kurukshetra; and there was a great slaughter, and the rivers flowed with blood, and the whole plain was covered with corpses; and when it was evening the battle was stayed, and the Pándavas and Kauravas returned to their respective camps. Now after nightfall Duryodhana summoned Karna, and Duhsásana, and Sakuni, and many others to Council, and said:—"This is the sixteenth day of our war with the Pándavas, and some of our greatest Captains, such as Bhíshma and Drona, have been slain to our great reproach." Karna then smote his hands together, and said:—"It has so happened that the Pándavas have escaped with their lives from my attack this day, but you shall see how I will deal with them to-morrow, as well as with their army; for I have determined with myself either to slay Arjuna and his brethren to-morrow, or to lay my head level with the ground." At these words Duryodhana and the other Kauravas returned with great elation of mind to their several quarters.

On the morning of the seventeenth day, both armies bathed and perfumed themselves, and arrayed themselves in all their splendour; and they all said to each other:—"This will be the great day of the war, and whoever comes out safely from this day's battle will be like one who is born again." And when both armies had been drawn up in opposite ranks, Karna ascended his chariot, and drove to the chariot of Duryodhana, and said:—"This is the day on which I will slay Arjuna, and now if I do not kill him you shall never see me again: But Arjuna has Krishna for his charioteer; and if Sálya, the Raja of Madra, will drive my chariot, I shall be certain to get the better of Arjuna, for if any one in all this army can match Krishna in driving, it is Sálya." So Raja Duryodhana went with some of his brethren to the quarters of Sálya, and Sálya was not yet

mounted for the battle; and he received Duryodhana with every mark of respect, and seated him on the same couch with himself." Duryodhana then said to Sálya:—"There is not in my army this day a single person who is equal to you, and just as the Pándavas pride themselves upon having Krishna, so do I pride myself upon having you: Now I have a particular request to make to you: To-day Karna is to combat with Arjuna, whose charioteer is Krishna, and we have no one among us who can drive like Krishna excepting yourself: My request is therefore that you will mount Karna's chariot this day, and drive it for him; and then Karna will certainly be the conqueror of Arjuna."

Duryodhana makes the request to Sálya.

When Sálya heard this speech he threw himself into a great rage, and rising up from his seat, he struck his hands together, and said:—"O Duryodhana, I have committed one great fault, that when I was going to join the Pándavas I suffered myself to be persuaded to join your army; and now I am punished by being asked to be a charioteer to Karna, who is himself the son of a charioteer: I have a hundred persons in my service who are quite equal to his father, and shall I make myself a servant to him?" So saying, Sálya went out in a rage, but Duryodhana and his brethren followed him, and said:—"We all of us respect you as our Chief, and we know that there is no one equal to you in either army save Krishna alone: We did not invite you to be charioteer to Karna out of disrespect, but because such a condescension on your part would ensure us the victory; and surely it would be no more derogatory for you to drive the chariot of Karna than it is for Krishna to drive the chariot of Arjuna." Sálya replied:—"Since you rank me with Krishna I am satisfied; and I will drive Karna's chariot provided he obeys my orders and does as I shall direct him." And Duryodhana agreed to the condition, and he and all his brethren paid many compliments to Sálya. So Sálya rose up and went towards Karna's chariot, and he said to Karna:—"At the request of Duryodhana I have consented to drive your chariot on the condition that you will not swerve from my advice." Karna answered:—

Sálya's indignation.

He sneers at the birth of Karna as the son of a charioteer.

Duryodhana assures Sálya of his respect, and ranks him with Krishna.

"As Síva was charioteer to Bráhma, and Krishna is charioteer to Arjuna, so have you now conferred a similar favour upon me."

Sálya drives Karna against Arjuna.

Karna then ascended the body of the chariot, and sounded his shell and beat his drum; and he said to Sálya:—"Drive speedily, I pray you, to the chariot of Arjuna, for I have nothing to do with Yudhishthira, or Bhíma, or the other Pándavas, but with Arjuna only." And Sálya drove off the chariot; and when they had gone a little way the four horses suddenly halted of their own accord, and a bone fell upon Karna from the air, and it could not be seen from whence it came. And Karna said:—"O Sálya, these are bad omens, and I much doubt if I shall return in safety from this battle; but I have no intention of returning, so drive me against Arjuna and Krishna, and God's will be done." Then Karna went to the field of battle, and there arose a contention between Karna and Sálya, for Sálya would vaunt the prowess of Arjuna, and declare that Karna would be alarmed at the twanging of his bow. And Karna replied in a rage:—"I have heard a description of the people of your country of Madra, and you measure me by what you are yourself; In your country, wives and mothers, sisters and daughters, brothers and uncles, all commune together without modesty or shame, and eat flesh and drink wine until they are drunk, and then all dance together in a medley; and if their enemy pray for quarter they continue fighting until they have killed him; and if the enemy prove victorious, they sacrifice their wives and children to him without shame or concern: But I have taken you with me to assist me in this conflict, not to try and terrify me with Arjuna, and be a cause of mischief to me: If your heart be right towards me, conduct me at once to Arjuna, and you shall then see how I will deal with him; but if you mean to deceive me, descend from the chariot before the battle begins, that I may get another driver in time, and do what I have to do; for if during the combat I see any sign of treachery in you, I will certainly slay you." And Sálya, hearing these words, began to drive Karna towards the ranks of the Pándavas.

Evil omens.

Contention between Karna and Sálya respecting the prowess of Arjuna.

Karna retorts by a reference to the depraved customs of Sálya's subjects.

Karna charges the Pándavas.

Now when Karna charged the Pándavas, Arjuna had

again gone away to fight against Susarman and his brethren; and Karna bore down upon the Pándavas, and pressed on to the spot where Yudhishthira was, and commenced a battle with him. And at first Yudhishthira wounded Karna in the breast, but Karna pressed him hard; and the people of Yudhishthira placed him on a fleet horse to favour his escape; but Karna pursued him, and pulled him off the horse by the neck, and said:—"Had you been a true Kshatriya and son of a Raja, you would never have turned your back upon the field of battle; but as you have spent so much of your time amongst Bráhmans, and have borrowed their disposition and manners, you cannot stand in the field against men of courage: Take therefore to your heels, for why should I slay you? Though had you been Arjuna I would have put you to death without hesitation." So Karna turned about, and left Yudhishthira upon the ground; and Yudhishthira was presently removed by his own people, but he bitterly reproached Bhíma and Dhrishta-dyumna for having suffered him to be so greatly dishonoured in the absence of Arjuna. Then Bhíma fell upon Karna, and a great battle ensued, and Karna once again bore down like a lion upon the ranks of the Pándavas. Meantime Arjuna had conquered Susarman and his brethren; and hearing that Karna was making great havoc he became alarmed for his elder brother Yudhishthira, and desired Krishna to drive him back to the side of Yudhishthira. And Krishna did so, and Yudhishthira was rejoiced to see them, for he thought that Arjuna had left him to fight Karna. When however Yudhishthira heard that Arjuna had merely gone away to fight Susarman, he was in a great rage; and he taunted Arjuna with having fled from Karna, and bade him give up his weapons to Krishna, and take himself the place of charioteer, so that Krishna might go out and fight against Karna. Then Arjuna was furious at the reproaches of Yudhishthira, and drew his sword, and would have killed him on the spot, had not Krishna interposed and prevented him. Arjuna then cried out:—"I have vowed to kill any man who should tell me to lay aside my arms, and therefore I must kill the Raja what-

Karna attacks Yudhishthira in the absence of Arjuna.

Reproaches Yudhishthira for the cowardice he had imbibed from Bráhmans.

Wrath of Yudhishthira at being left without protection.

Anger of Yudhishthira with Arjuna for fighting Susarman when he should have been fighting Karna.

Arjuna taunted by Yudhishthira.

Draws his sword, and threatens to kill Yudhishthira.

ever guilt I may incur." But Krishna said:—"Away with you and your speech for threatening to kill your Raja! Have you never read the Vedas, or heard that any one who attempts the life of his father, or elder brother, or Raja, will never see Swarga, for that God's anger will be kindled against him, and a perpetual curse fall upon him?" Then Arjuna was much abashed, and said:—"How am I to escape from my guilt; I am compelled to break my resolution to kill any one who desired me to lay down my arms, and I have threatened the life of my Raja and elder brother." Krishna answered:—"The satisfaction of Raja Yudhishthira will absolve you of both, and that satisfaction depends upon your slaying Karna." Krishna then went to Yudhishthira and interceded for Arjuna, and cast Arjuna at his feet, and the two brothers were again reconciled.

Reconciled to Yudhishthira by Krishna.

All this while Bhíma had engaged in a deadly conflict with Karna and Duryodhana; when Duryodhana's brother Duhsásana came up to their aid, and shooting an arrow from one side, he slew Bhíma's charioteer. Now Duhsásana was that wicked Kaurava who had dragged Draupadí into the gambling pavilion, and treated her like a slave girl; and Bhíma had sworn a great oath that the day should come when he would drink the blood of Duhsásana. And when Bhíma saw Duhsásana he was filled with wrath; and he aimed such a stroke at Duhsásana with his mace, that he drove him, chariot and all, to the distance of a bow-shot; and Duhsásana fell with such force to the ground that he broke all his bones, whilst his chariot was dashed to pieces. Duhsásana trembled for a moment, and began to give up the ghost, when Bhíma running up to him lifted him from the ground and whirled him round his head, and shouted with a loud voice:—"O Kauravas! Behold Duhsásana has come to the aid of Karna, and see how I have smitten him: Whoever of you has sufficient strength and courage, let him come and release Duhsásana from my hands!" No one however dared to approach, and Bhíma continued thus:—"This day I fulfil my vow against the man who insulted Draupadí!" Then setting his foot on the breast of Duh-

Bhíma attacked by Duhsásana.

Deadly conflict between Bhíma and Duhsásana.

Bhíma's address to the Kauravas.

Fulfils his vow by drinking the blood of Duhsásana.

sásana, he drew his sword, and cut off the head of his enemy; and holding his two hands to catch the blood, he drank it off, crying out:—"Ho! ho! Never did I taste anything in this world so sweet as this blood." At this sight the Kauravas began to weep very bitterly, whilst the Pándavas rejoiced; and the Kauravas threw away their arms and fled, saying:—"This is not a man, for if he were he would not drink human blood!"

Arjuna goes forth to a final battle with Karna.

Meantime Arjuna had gone forth in his chariot, with Krishna for his charioteer, to fight against Karna; and this battle was the most famous in all the war. And when Arjuna and Karna beheld each other they sounded their war-shells, and prepared for a terrible combat; for each one was determined either to conquer his enemy, or to give up the ghost upon the plain. And all the warriors in both armies gave over fighting and stood round to see the great battle; and all the gods came down from heaven to behold the contest between Arjuna and Karna; and Karna said to Sálya:—"This day now be so careful of myself and my chariot, that the whole world may resound with your commendations." Arjuna also said to Krishna:—"You know full well the valour and prowess of Karna; I therefore beseech you so to manage my chariot that Karna may find no occasion of advantage over me." Then the battle commenced, each one shooting arrows at the other from his own chariot, whilst all the armies of the Pándavas and Kauravas looked on; and for a long time no man could say who would gain the day. At length Arjuna was so wounded and stunned by the arrows of Karna that he would have been defeated, but at that moment one of the wheels of Karna's chariot sunk deeply into the earth, and it would not stir, notwithstanding all that Sálya could do to urge the horses to the utmost. And Karna leaped from his chariot to relieve the wheel, and cried out to Arjuna:—"Hold your hand for one moment, to give me the chance of recovering my wheel; for it is no mark of manhood to strike at me whilst I am in this extremity." And Arjuna stayed his hand, but Krishna cried out:—"O Karna, what you say is

The armies stop fighting, and the gods descend from heaven.

Arjuna and Karna address their respective charioteers.

The battle.

A wheel of Karna's chariot sinks into the earth.

Arjuna stays from fighting. Krishna reminds Arjuna of the insults to Draupadí and murder of Abhimanyu.

true enough, but where was the manhood when Draupadí was insulted in the midst of the assembly, and when you and five or six more surrounded the stripling Abhimanyu, and put him to death without pity?" When Arjuna heard this allusion to the slaughter of his son, the fire of wrath burst from his eyes and nostrils, and he drew forth an arrow with a broad sharp blade at the end shaped like a crescent; and he discharged it with all his strength whilst Karna was endeavouring to release his chariot-wheel, and it struck the neck of Karna and severed his head from his body.

Arjuna slays Karna with a crescent-shaped arrow.

Then the Pándavas beat their drums, and sounded the trumpets of triumph, but the Kauravas were filled with great grief and consternation; for they said that they had no other hero now that Bhíshma, and Drona, and Karna were numbered with the slain. And they fled in all directions like scattered sheep, and Duryodhana tried to rally them against Arjuna, but in vain. And Kripa said to Duryodhana:—"Those heroes upon whom you depended for success are now no more: I therefore advise you to enter into a treaty with the Pándavas: From what I know of the character of Yudhishthira I do not consider that it is too late to propose peace: If you make your intentions known to him, he will still be glad to share the Raj with you; whereas it would be folly for you to continue this destructive war." Duryodhana replied:—"I am perfectly aware of your friendship for me, and of the services rendered by you in this very war: I know that what you say does not proceed from any selfish motive, but from a pure regard for my own welfare; but I cannot act according to your counsel, as a man who is destined to die will not follow the advice of a physician: After all the wrongs I have inflicted upon the Pándavas, with what face can I now ask for a treaty? I am therefore resolved to carry on this war, be the consequences what they may." And the whole army of the Kauravas was filled with new life by this speech of Duryodhana; and their despair left them, and they resolved that on the morrow they would renew the attack upon the Pándavas.

Triumph of the Pándavas and consternation of the Kauravas.

Flight of the Kauravas.

Kripa advises Duryodhana to conclude a treaty.

Refusal of Duryodhana.

The Kauravas resolve to renew the battle on the morrow.

Review of the foregoing narrative of Karna's command.

The foregoing narrative of the war during the two days in which the command was held by Karna scarcely calls for much consideration. On the first day the two armies confined themselves to general charges, but the second day is filled with single combats which seem to have decided the fortunes of the war. The battles between Karna and Yudhishthira, Bhíma and Duhsásana, Arjuna and Karna, are all curious and interesting, but seem to require no explanation.[3]

4th, Sálya's command—one day.

The narrative of the eighteenth day of the war, and single day of Sálya's command, is as follows:—

Election of Sálya to be Generalissimo of the Kauravas.

Now on the evening of the seventeenth day of the war, being the day in which Karna was slain by Arjuna, the Kauravas appointed Sálya to be their Generalissimo in the room of Karna. And Duryodhana said to Sálya:—"The time has come when friends and enemies are to be tested: I considered you as my friend; do you therefore prove yourself to be such by accepting the post of Generalissimo." And Sálya replied:—"I am ready to do as you

[3] The description of the battle between Arjuna and Karna is overlaid in the original by many supernatural details, and it may be convenient to record in a note the seven mythical circumstances to which the death of Karna is ascribed by Nárada the sage.

1st, He is said to have surreptitiously induced Parasu Ráma, the Brahmanical hero, to teach him the Brahmanical mode of archery, which ought only to be imparted to a Bráhman, after which Parasu Ráma prayed that the archery might fail him in battle.

2nd, He was cursed by a Bráhman for having killed the man's calf while aiming at a deer, that the earth should arrest his chariot-wheel in battle.

3rd, He had given to Indra the golden cuirass and earrings with which he had been born. This myth is connected with the fable that he was begotten upon Kuntí by the Sun god.

4th, He had presumed to be the rival of Bhíshma.

5th, He had disobeyed his assumed mother Kuntí by fighting Arjuna.

6th, His enemy Arjuna was steadily assisted by Krishna throughout the battle.

7th, When Karna shot a snake at Arjuna instead of an arrow, Arjuna was saved from certain death by Krishna, who miraculously lowered the chariot, and thus prevented the snake from doing more than cut off Arjuna's tiara.

order; My Raj, my wealth, and my life, are all at your service: I accept the post you offer me, and I promise that the sun when it sets on the morrow shall either see you without an enemy upon this earth, or else see me slain upon the plain of Kurukshetra." And Duryodhana and the remaining Kauravas rejoiced as they heard the words of Sálya, and they set up a loud shout which reached the camp of the Pándavas; and Yudhishthira, hearing that the Kauravas had appointed Sálya to be their Generalissimo, issued the necessary orders for renewing the battle on the morrow, which would be the eighteenth day of the war. Then both armies retired to rest, and slumbered until the dawn of morning.

Eighteenth and last day of the war.

Kauravas abstain from single combats.

Sálya slain by Yudhishthira.

Utter defeat of the Kauravas.

Now the eighteenth day was the last of the great war, and the Kauravas, seeing that their numbers were few, made a new rule, that no man should engage in single combat with any of the Pándavas, but that all should fight together in support of the common cause. Then the battle commenced, and both sides fought desperately; and Yudhishthira engaged with Sálya, and slew him after much fighting. And the Kauravas were beaten on all sides, and Duryodhana, seeing that all was lost, fled secretly from the battle like one distracted, but he still carried his mace in his hand.

Duryodhana conceals himself in the lake.

Three survivors

General search for Duryodhana.

Now there was a lake in the plain of Kurukshetra, and Duryodhana possessed a charm by which he could remain under water for as long as he pleased, so he plunged into the lake, and no man knew where he was concealed. Meantime all the warriors on the side of the Kauravas were slain, excepting three only, namely, Kripa, Aswatthámа, and Kritavarman; but these three continued fighting with the Pándavas, until they saw that Duryodhana was no longer present in the field. Then they said one to another:—"We are fighting the battle of Duryodhana, but lo, he himself is not to be found: Wherefore then should we expose ourselves to the last extremity for nothing? Let us go and look for Duryodhana!" So the three warriors left the field of battle and searched for Duryodhana all over the fatal plain of Kurukshetra; and the Pándavas in like manner searched for Duryodhana, but they could find no trace of him, and accord-

ingly returned to their own quarters. Meanwhile the three Kaurava warriors were told that Duryodhana had concealed himself beneath the waters of the lake, and they went to the side of the lake, and cried out:—"O Raja, arise out of the water, that we may still do battle in your service, and under your auspices make another struggle for victory." Duryodhana replied with a loud voice:—"I see you all three from where I am, and I thank God that he has preserved your lives; but his favour is now with the Pándavas, and it is not advisable for us to continue the contest against them: Do you therefore remain in quiet, until I shall see what turn may be taken by the hidden events of futurity." Aswattháma replied:—"Be not too much troubled by the slaughter of your armies, for while we three are in your service, we are still able to slay a thousand such as the Pándavas; and if you will only come out of this lake we will avenge you completely upon your enemies."

The three Kaurava warriors discover Duryodhana, and pray him to renew the battle.

Duryodhana declines, and recommends concealment.

Aswattháma vainly remonstrates.

Meantime Yudhishthira had sent many men in all directions to procure tidings of Duryodhana, but they had all returned without finding him. And Yudhishthira and his brethren were very uneasy, and they said one to the other:—"All the anxieties and fatigues we have endured during this war are of no avail so long as Duryodhana is missing; for whilst he lives he may yet find means to raise another army, and renew the war against us." Now it so happened that at this time some of the servants of Bhíma, who had gone out to hunt game for their master's supper, had come to the lake to drink water; and they overheard this discourse between Aswattháma and Duryodhana, and discovered that Duryodhana was concealed in the lake; and accordingly they hastened away to carry the news to the Pándavas that they might obtain a reward for their discovery. When the Pándavas heard that Duryodhana had been found, they were overjoyed, and bestowed great rewards upon the servants of Bhíma, and all set off at once for the lake. And when Aswattháma and Kripa and Kritavarman saw them coming, they said to one another:—"If Duryodhana would join us we would certainly fight them, but as we have no

Failure of the Pándavas to discover Duryodhana.

Bhíma's servants discover him.

The Pándavas proceed to the lake.

leader it is useless to expose our lives." So the three warriors hid themselves in a great tree, whence they could see all that took place; and the Pándavas came up to the side of the lake, and Yudhishthira called out with a loud voice:—"O Duryodhana, you have caused the death of so many thousands of people, that it is now shameful in you to hide yourself at the bottom of this lake: You fought manfully enough at first; so come out now and let us see whether God will give the victory to you or to us: A man of your rank ought not to turn his face from a challenge: Why do you, being a Kshatriya, care so much for your own life after the sacrifice of the lives of your friends and relatives?"

Yudhishthira calls upon Duryodhana to leave the lake.

Duryodhana replied:—"I did not enter this lake from fear; but as all my people have been killed, and my arms and chariots are all broken in pieces, and my charioteer is slain, and I myself am extremely weary and worn out, I am come hither to rest and refresh myself a little, and when I am somewhat recovered, I will come out and renew the contest with you."

Duryodhana prays for rest before renewing the combat.

Yudhishthira replied:—"Our ease and comfort for to-day is to fight with you: Come out therefore and fight us, and if you conquer, go and take your ease upon the throne: The refreshment you would now take at the bottom of the lake is too mean for you."

Yudhishthira remonstrates.

Duryodhana answered:—"My Raj consisted of my brethren, and friends, and kinsmen; and now that they are gone, what sort of Rajaship can I exercise? Take you the Raj, and I wish you joy of it, for your brethren are all still living, and most of your friends and your troops still remain to serve you: Even now, if I wished, I could conquer all five of you and all your allies; but seeing that Bhíshma, and Drona, and Karna are no more, I do not want to fight: So leave me to my fate, for I shall assume the garb of skins, and retire in prayer to the desert; and do you take upon yourself the government of the Raj, and leave me to myself."

Duryodhana prays the Pándavas to take the Raj, and let him retire to the desert.

Yudhishthira said:—"Think not of exciting any pity by speaking to me in this manner: Your language now is not consistent with your former resolution not to give us an inch of land except by war: You may now be disposed to give me my share in the Raj, but I myself am not disposed to accept anything from you, even

Yudhishthira refuses to take the Raj except by conquest.

if you offer me the whole earth: I must establish my rights by conquering you: You cannot save your life by these tempting offers to me: If you and I remain alive, people will be doubtful of the result of this war."

Duryodhana offers to fight the Pándavas one at a time, if they will fight fairly.

On hearing these words, Duryodhana smote his hands together under the water, and was almost provoked to come out from the lake; but he restrained himself, and again cried out with a loud voice:—"You know full well that I have neither friend nor brother remaining, nor even a chariot to mount upon for the purpose of battle; nor have I armour, nor bow and arrows, nor sword, nor spear wherewith to enter into combat with you; nor have I anything now remaining save my mace: So if you all attack me at once, you will kill me in a moment: But if you will bind yourselves to fight me only one by one, I will accept the challenge and come out and kill you all; and you must engage to fight me fairly, and not make use of any stratagem or foul play against me: If then you will agree to these terms, and promise not to swerve from them, I will fight you; and as the sun overpowers the stars, and eclipses their light with his light, so shall my light outshine you all."

Yudhishthira accepts the conditions.

Yudhishthira replied:—"Now you have spoken in a manner worthy of yourself and your own dignity, and we will engage ourselves by oath not to go from the promises we will make you: If you will fight us alone, as you now say, and shall conquer us, your name and honour will redound to the world's end, and every one who shall survive you and us will make a proverb of your prowess, and say:—'Raja Duryodhana slew all the five brethren, and so secured to himself the empire of the world.'"

Duryodhana stipulates to fight with the mace only.

Duryodhana then said:—"I am on foot, and have no weapon here save my mace: Whoever fights with me must therefore only use that weapon, and must fight on foot like myself; and then, even if Indra were to combat me with the mace, I am certain to come off conqueror."

Yudhishthira agrees.

Yudhishthira answered:—"Whatever mode you propose we will agree to, so come out now, and take your choice as to which of us you will fight with."

Now though Raja Yudhishthira repeated these assurances a hundred times, Duryodhana continued to repeat the conditions which he demanded, without making any advance towards coming out of the lake. So Yudhishthira said to Krishna:—"You see that this man merely holds us at bay with fair speeches." And Krishna answered:—"If you would have Duryodhana come out of the lake in good earnest, you should desire Bhíma to speak to him; for he will never bear with Bhíma's provoking words, but will speedily come out of the water." Then Yudhishthira commanded Bhíma to call upon Duryodhana to come out; and Bhíma cried out with a loud voice:—"O Duryodhana, how long do you mean to shelter yourself by falsehood? We have consented to every condition proposed by you; why then do you delay making your appearance? If you hope to deceive us by these speeches, and to escape from us with your life by such artifices, it will be of no avail; for if you are determined not to come out, I will myself enter the water and haul you out by main force."

Duryodhana still remains in the lake.

Krishna advises Bhíma to provoke Duryodhana to leave the water.

Bhíma's irritating address to Duryodhana.

Duryodhana answered:—"What you are now doing is altogether improper for a Kshatriya: You say that it is fair and right for a Kshatriya to accept every challenge that is offered him: Now I do not say that I will not fight you, but I say that it is now mid-day, and I wish to rest a little, and on the morrow I will fight you in any way you may desire."

Duryodhana offers to fight on the morrow.

Bhíma then said:—"O Duryodhana, you speak of the rules which Kshatriyas should follow, but what rules did you observe when you ordered poison to be given to me, and when you plotted to burn us alive in the city of Váranávata, and when by foul play at the gambling match you stripped us of our all, and compelled us to go into exile, and caused Draupadí to be dragged into the assembly by the hair of her head? But it is something that even in your dying hour you can call to mind the true principles of a Kshatriya: A hundred curses be upon that life to which you have sacrificed all your brethren and their families, and the venerable Bhíshma, and your tutor Drona, and your best

Bhíma threatens to drag Duryodhana out of the lake.

friend and companion Karna; and yet, wonderful depravity, you still wish to live; but I promise you that unless you leave the lake without delay I shall enter the water and bring you out with my own hand."

Duryodhana leaves the lake.

When Duryodhana heard these provoking words of Bhíma, he could no longer endure them, but lifted his head from the water; and he sighed so loudly that the sound was heard a mile off. Then taking his mace in his hand he walked out of the water towards the Pándavas. And all the followers of the Pándavas laughed at him, crying out:—"Look at the Raja who possessed such mighty armies! See how he moves!" And Duryodhana was in vehement wrath at their laughter, and cried out:—"What do you sneer at? I will now slay you all, and turn your laughter to tears." Then he advanced with his mace, and he appeared so grim and ghastly that men took him to be Yama. When he came nigh, Raja Yudhishthira said to him:—"I will provide you with all weapons, and whatever else you may require." And every kind of weapon and armour was immediately made ready and placed before Duryodhana. Then Duryodhana took up a golden cuirass and put it on, and said:—"One man should oppose one man, but come on as it is your own wish, and I will fight you all together." Yudhishthira answered:—"If one man should oppose one man, how was it that so many of you surrounded the stripling Abhimanyu, and killed him amongst you?" Duryodhana made no reply, and Yudhishthira said to Krishna:—"If you speak the word I will go and fight him myself." Krishna answered:—"You are no match for Duryodhana with the mace; so do not expose yourself to be killed for nothing: It is a common proverb that we must use a stone to break a stone: So do you command Bhíma to go and fight Duryodhana, for he is his equal." Bhíma came forward at these words, and said:—"Only send me, and under your auspices I shall certainly slay Duryodhana; and if he had his whole army with him I would kill them all: So let me go and take my revenge on him." Then Krishna and all the others applauded Bhíma;

Laughter of the followers of the Pándavas.

His ghastly appearance.

Yudhishthira offers him arms and armour.

Question of who should fight Duryodhana.

Krishna suggests Bhíma.

Bhíma gladly assents.

and Bhíma went and kissed the feet of Raja Yudhishthira and of Krishna, and received their blessings, and the blessings of all his brethren.

Bhíma and Duryodhana reproach each other.

Bhíma then took his mace in his hand, and went forward in a pompous style until he came up to Duryodhana; and he said:—"O Duryodhana, this is the day for me to punish all your evil actions; how you played foul with us at gambling, and sent us to the jungle, and insulted Draupadí, and defrauded us of our Raj." Duryodhana replied:—"O Bhíma, the field is the scene for action and not for words: If you have any manhood shut your mouth and ply your arms: Come on and let us try our skill, and see to whom God will give the victory."

Balaráma, brother of Krishna, appears upon the plain.

Now it so happened that at this moment, just as they were on the point of fighting, Balaráma, the elder brother of Krishna, arrived at that place, having completed his pilgrimage to the sepulchres of his fathers at Prabhása. So all present rose up and paid reverence to Balaráma; and Yudhishthira told him that he was come just in time, for that these two, Duryodhana and Bhíma, who had both been his pupils in the use of the mace, were on the point of going to fight; and Yudhishthira and his brethren besought Balaráma to stay and behold the combat. And when Duryodhana and Bhíma saw Balaráma, they both came and fell at his feet, and besought his leave to engage; and when they had obtained his permission, they chose their ground and prepared for battle. Then Balaráma called them both to him, and said:—"I perceive that one of you two must be slain, and the proper place to die is in the middle of the plain of Kurukshetra." Accordingly all present proceeded to the middle of Kurukshetra, and Yudhishthira commanded that all the drums and trumpets that were in the camp should be sounded; and Duryodhana and Bhíma stood with their battle-axes ready to engage. At length they commenced with a mock skirmish, hurling their maces in the air, or whirling them round their heads and shouting. Then they ran at each other, and struck each other so violently with their maces that the earth trembled; and now the

Advises the combatants to fight in the middle of the plain.

The battle.

Desperate struggle.

battle began, each striking at the other with his mace, or leaping in the air, or stooping to the earth to avoid a blow, whilst all the people were standing round and looking on. And many a time the one or the other was beaten violently to the ground, whilst the noise of the blows reached to the sky, and the blood streamed from their bodies from the waist upwards. And Krishna said to Yudhishthira and Arjuna:—"Bhíma is superior to Duryodhana in strength of limb, but Duryodhana is his superior in agility and knowledge of the mace, and will certainly gain the victory, unless Bhíma changes his mode of fighting." Then Krishna hinted that Bhíma should fulfil the vow, which he had made when Draupadí was insulted, that he would smash the thigh of Duryodhana; for otherwise not only would Bhíma be beaten by Duryodhana, but each one of the remaining four brethren would be in like manner beaten after him. Krishna also said:—"If, when Duryodhana came out of the water, Raja Yudhishthira had not agreed to the conditions which he proposed, then you, O Pándavas, might have surrounded him and put him to death in the same manner that the Kauravas surrounded Abhimanyu and slew him; but now there will be no end to the feud, for during all the thirteen years that you were in exile, Duryodhana has been ever practising himself in the use of the mace, saying to himself:—'If the Pándavas should overpower my armies, and kill every man of them, I will still fight them one after the other with this mace, and be the death of them all:' In this manner he has rendered himself superior to Bhíma; and there is no other remedy but this little foul play of striking his thigh, which you must hint to Bhíma to put into practice." So Arjuna cast a significant look towards Bhíma, and struck himself upon the right thigh with his hand, and Bhíma immediately comprehended his meaning, and began to shift and feint with his blows; but Duryodhana, by his prodigious alertness, avoided every stroke. At length they came to closer quarters and struck heavily at each other; and Duryodhana gave Bhíma so violent a blow upon the head that all present thought he was killed;

Krishna advises Bhima to commit foul play.

Arjuna gives the hint to Bhima.

Bhíma nearly killed. Smashes the thigh of Duryodhana.

when Bhíma suddenly jumped up and laid about him in all directions, until at last, when Duryodhana was leaping about to aim another blow, Bhíma struck him so violently upon the right thigh, that it smashed the bone, and Duryodhana fell heavily to the ground, and the earth shook like a cup of quicksilver.

Bhíma kicks Duryodhana on the head.

When Bhíma saw that Duryodhana had fallen, he began to strut and wheel round him like a war elephant, and coming up to him he kicked him on the forehead with his two feet, saying:—"You have now received the retribution of all the abominable acts you have committed against us, and all your offences against Draupadí." And again Bhíma kicked him on the head twice or thrice. Then Raja Yudhishthira was exceedingly wroth at the conduct of Bhíma, and struck him a severe blow in the face with his fist, saying:—"A curse be upon you! What villany is this, to expose us all to be evil spoken of by all the world, who will condemn us for ever for this baseness?" Yudhishthira then ordered Arjuna to take Bhíma by the arm and thrust him away; and Yudhishthira came forward weeping very bitterly and took the hand of Duryodhana, and said:—"This evil you have brought upon yourself: We have all acknowledged you to be our lord, and would have served you with our lives and our hearts, but you bore malice against us, and drove us from our house and home into utter ruin: Even then we would have been content with five villages, but you refused us, and desired our deaths, and forced us to go to war with you: But still you are our lord, and we acknowledge you to be our sovereign; and the curse of God will therefore rest upon this act of Bhíma; and if you command me, I will even order him to be put to death for it: Be not however concerned at your present condition, for it is your certain passport to eternal paradise; but as for our lot, it is hard indeed, for all those whom you leave behind you, all your wives and children, will curse and condemn us for your fate."

Wrath of Yudhishthira.

Yudhishthira strikes Bhíma in the face.

Addresses Duryodhana.

With these words Raja Yudhishthira again wept profusely, but by this time Balaráma had risen up and ap-

Balaráma's indignation at Bhíma's foul play.

proached Duryodhana; and when Balaráma saw that his thigh was broken, he cried out to the Pándavas:—"In fighting with the mace, it is contrary to all rule to strike below the waist; and since in an open contest for the Raj, you are guilty of foul play, and transgress the laws of the combat, I will slay you all." And Balaráma took the ploughshare and the pestle, which he always carried with him as his weapons, and prepared to attack the Pándavas, and they all fled from before him; and he pursued them in great wrath, when Krishna caught him in his arms, and said:—"O brother, these Pándavas are our kinsmen and are worthy men; and in the present case Bhíma has not transgressed the rule of fighting, because Duryodhana had long ago incurred the blame by foul play with the dice, when Bhíma swore in the presence both of Duryodhana and Yudhishthira, that he would break the thigh of Duryodhana, and he has now only fulfilled his vow: Moreover, the Kauravas are all slain and gone, and if you now slaughter the Pándavas to whom will you give the Raj?" Balaráma answered:—"You say that these men are in the right; but how could I look on and see Bhíma set his foot upon the head of Duryodhana?" And Krishna tried his best to explain away the evil act; and he refused to release Balaráma until he had sworn to work no further ill against the Pándavas; and Balaráma made the promise and was released, and he immediately mounted his chariot, and went his way to Dwáraká.

Balaráma prepares to slay the Pándavas, but is prevented by Krishna.

Krishna defends Bhíma.

Balaráma denounces Bhíma.

Krishna excuses Bhíma.

When Balaráma had departed from the plain of Kurukshetra, Bhíma came forward and threw himself at the feet of Raja Yudhishthira, and implored pardon for the evil he had committed against Duryodhana; and Krishna and Arjuna, and all the rest who were present, came up and solicited the Raja for his forgiveness, which at last they obtained. Then they all went in a body to the spot where Duryodhana was lying, and they sat down around him. Duryodhana then charged Krishna with having been the cause of the death of Drona, and the death of Karna, and with having given the signal to Bhíma to strike him on the thigh contrary to the rules of fair fighting; and Krishna

Bhíma forgiven by Yudhishthira.

The Pándavas go with Krishna to see Duryodhana.

Recriminations between Duryodhana and Krishna.

retorted by recapitulating all the wrongs committed by Duryodhana against his kinsmen, and especially with the affront offered to Draupadí, and the cruel murder of the stripling Abhimanyu. Duryodhana replied:—"I governed my Raj with so much justice that the wolf and the lamb drank water from the same pond, and none ever demanded a thing from me that I did not bestow upon him: No one before me had conducted a government so well as myself, nor will any one who may follow me be able to equal it; and I now beseech the Almighty that he will give me in eternity that lot which shall be the just retribution of my conduct." Whilst Duryodhana was thus speaking, flowers fell from heaven upon his head, and celestial music was heard in the sky; and when the Pándavas perceived these things, their faces all turned pale, and they were seized with trembling.

Manifestations of the divine approval of Duryodhana.

Then Krishna, seeing that the Pándavas were all down-hearted, said to them:—"You are now become Rajas, and have obtained the Raj at the point of your own swords, what is it therefore that you fear? Take the government into your own hands, and administer justice to the ryots and to all those who are oppressed, and for all your good efforts God will reward you in the other world." Krishna then sounded his shell with all his might, and proclaimed the reign of Raja Yudhishthira; and he made known that all who had risked their lives in support of the Raja should be exalted with due honours and rewards. And all the people who were present rejoiced greatly, and filled the air with their acclamations, crying out:—"Long live Raja Yudhishthira!"

Krishna consoles the Pándavas, and proclaims Yudhishthira as Raja.

After this the Pándavas and their friends mounted their chariots and proceeded towards the camp of the Kauravas, leaving a few persons behind to look after Duryodhana. And when they arrived at the camp of their enemies, they found no one there save a few old people; and they entered the quarters of Duryodhana, and saw so many jewels, and so much gold and spoil of all kinds, that their eyes were dazzled with the sight.

The Pándavas proceed to the camp of the Kauravas and obtain great spoil.

Then Yudhishthira said to Krishna:—"I would have

Yudhishthira requests Krishna to proceed to Hastinápur, and excuse the proceedings of himself and brethren to the Mahárája.

wished to have paid a visit to Mahárája Dhritaráshtra and the Ráni Gándhárí, and to have excused ourselves as much as possible to Gándhárí, who is a woman of the strictest virtue, and of a sound religious character, and who has always shown me great kindness: But now night has come on and I cannot wait upon her, and I am afraid that when she shall hear the news that all her sons are slain, she may utter a curse against us so that we all perish: I therefore pray you to go to Hastinápur alone to-night, and soothe her all you can, and do not let her unawares pronounce a curse upon us." Krishna replied:—"What you have said is perfectly proper." And he immediately set off for Hastinápur, and arrived there before one quarter of the night was spent; and he waited upon Dhritaráshtra, whom he found seated in his palace, and went and took his hand and kissed it. And the blind Mahárája immediately guessed who he was, and said:—"It is Krishna!" And Krishna answered:—"Yes." Then Dhritaráshtra began loudly to weep and to wail, saying:—"O Krishna, do you approve of the slaughter of my sons?" Krishna answered:—"Your heart is your eye, and nothing can be concealed from you, and you must be aware that what has occurred to your children is from the great god Siva, and not from me nor from the Pándavas." Dhritaráshtra said:—"I cannot but acknowledge this, and at present patience is my only remedy: But I am in great pain for Duryodhana's death, on account of his mother Gándhárí; because women are naturally not so patient as men are: She must have heard of the slaughter of her sons, and she will be very miserable: So do you now go and visit her, and comfort her as well as you are able; perchance she is already dead with anguish."

Krishna reaches Hastinápur on the first quarter of the night.

Interview between Krishna and the Mahárája.

Affecting interview between Krishna and the Ráni Gándhárí.

Now whilst Krishna was preparing to go to the Ráni, Gándhárí herself entered the door, and all in tears said to him:—"O Krishna, had you no compassion for me, and did you deem it right that all my sons should be slaughtered?" And with these words she fell down in a swoon. And Krishna's heart burnt within him, and he burst into tears, fearing that Gándhárí was really dead, and he called for

some sweet odours and sprinkled them upon her face. And Dhritaráshtra also came and laid Gándhárí's head upon his knees, and after a considerable time she began to revive. Krishna then said to her:—"You are not as other women are, so as to lose all power of patience and resignation; or not to know that there is no remedy against the will of Providence: Were you not always aware from the conduct of your two sons, Duryodhana and Duhsásana, that such a day as this must certainly await them? Will you not allow of yourself that in all this business no one is to blame but your sons? You yourself know what counsel I gave to Duryodhana, when I came here as ambassador from the Pándavas: Now consider that these Pándavas are also your sons, and have done nothing but in self-defence; and that what has befallen your own sons is only what your sons were desirous of inflicting upon the Pándavas: You are a woman of great understanding; say now whether what has befallen your sons can be attributed as a crime to any one but Duryodhana: Do not therefore make a useless clamour, but submit with patience, and eternal paradise will hereafter be your portion from God: You are a woman of that profound sanctity, that if you were only once to utter a curse against the whole world, God would for your sake involve it in destruction; but if, seeing that your sons are already slain, you should now curse the Pándavas, who will fulfil every filial duty to you and your husband a thousand times better than was done by your own sons, what advantage could possibly accrue to you?"

Krishna consoles Gándhárí by engaging that the Pándavas should prove more dutiful than the Kauravas.

Gándhárí listened attentively to all these arguments, and said to Krishna:—"I pray God to bless you for having awakened me from the state of grief in which I was plunged by the loss of my children, so that I was very nearly uttering a curse against the Pándavas: But I am now aware that what you have said is just and right, and that I have no remedy but resignation: But now you must take care of this aged, blind, grief-stricken, broken-hearted husband of mine; and do not let too much evil overwhelm him, nor his enemies work their will upon him."

Gándhárí's reply to Krishna.

Krishna renews his promises.

Krishna answered her:—"Fear not, for Raja Yudhishthira will perform every filial duty to your husband Dhritaráshtra a thousand times better than was ever done by Duryodhana; and the Maháraja will be a thousand times better treated by the Pándavas than ever he was by his own sons; and if Duryodhana and Duhsásana were your sons, Yudhishthira and Arjuna will be your slaves." And Gándhárí was consoled by these words of Krishna; and Krishna then returned to the Pándavas, who had taken up their quarters for the night in the camp of the Kauravas; and he entered the presence of Yudhishthira and related to him all that had occurred during his visit at Hastinápur.

Returns to the quarters of the Pándavas in the camp of the Kauravas.

Review of the foregoing narrative of the last day of the great war.

The foregoing narrative of the events of the last day of the great war is deeply interesting, but calls for little comment. The mythical references to Krishna are however singularly suggestive; both as regards his strange counsel during the battle between Bhíma and Duryodhana, and his mythical mission to Hastinápur at the conclusion of the war. Upon the former point it may be remarked that Duryodhana had hitherto displayed a peculiar enmity towards Krishna; or, to use a later and more mythical form of expression, he had ever opposed the worship of Krishna, and disbelieved in his divine nature. For some strange reason, which can scarcely be fathomed, the deaths of the three leading heroes of the Kauravas are ascribed to Krishna's interference, although each case involved a moral delinquency. He caused the death of Drona by suggesting the lie which was told as regards Aswattháma. He caused the death of Karna by counselling Arjuna to shoot an arrow when Karna was trying to raise his chariot-wheel from the earth. Finally, he suggested the foul blow with the mace beneath the waist by which Duryodhana was mor-

Mythical references to Krishna.

Extraordinary counsel of Krishna that Bhíma should strike a foul blow.

Deaths of the three heroes of the Kauravas ascribed to the immoral interference of Krishna.

tally wounded by Bhíma. Accordingly the divine hero is bitterly reproached by Duryodhana for these offences; and the difficulty is to understand why the Brahmanical compilers should have attributed such undoubted deviations from morality to their own particular deity. Possibly they desired to transfer the guilt from responsible heroes to an irresponsible Supreme Being. The narrative of Yudhishthira's lie, of Arjuna's unfair shot, and of Bhíma's foul blow, may have been related in the original tradition, without any reference to Krishna, and without any attempt at palliation, simply because at that early period they were not opposed to the moral sense of the community. In the Brahmanical age however such deeds were by no means creditable to the national heroes; although when changed to religious mysteries, and ascribed to an incarnation of the Supreme Being, they might be treated as acts which mere humanity could not venture to praise or condemn.

Krishna reproached by Duryodhana.

Origin of the myth.

The mission of Krishna to console the blind Maháraja Dhritaráshtra, and the Rání Gándhárí, for the slaughter of their sons, and, above all, to reconcile the bereaved pair to the murderers of their sons, is a circumstance which is far more in accordance with the religious character of Krishna, who is not unfrequently represented as a consoler in times of sorrow and suffering. Indeed, the tone of thought which prevails throughout this portion of the poem sufficiently indicates its later origin; and it may be safely passed over as a pure invention and interpolation of the Brahmanical compilers.

Krishna appears in his mission to Hastinápur in the character of a consoler.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REVENGE OF ASWATTHÁMA.

Termination of the war and triumph of the Pándavas.

Three warriors alone remaining of all the forces of the Kauravas.

THE great war of Bhárata was now over. The cause of the Pándavas had triumphed. Duryodhana was lying mortally wounded upon the plain of Kurukshetra, and of all his numerous followers only three remained alive. But these three were still prepared to renew the struggle; a circumstance that tends to confirm the view that the war turned upon single combats, and that the forces engaged might have been counted by tens or hundreds rather than by millions or billions. Amongst these three men was one named Aswatthâma. He was the son of the old preceptor Drona, and had fought, like his father, on the side of the Kauravas, but had hitherto made no figure in the history. When however Drona was slain by Dhrishta-dyumna on the fifteenth day of the war, Aswatthâma had sworn to be revenged on his father's murderer; and on the night of the last day of the war circumstances occurred which enabled him to fulfil his vow. Yudhishthira and his brethren were sleeping in the camp of the Kauravas, on the opposite side of the lake; but all their surviving followers and servants, together with their wife Draupadí and their five sons, were sleeping in

Vow of Aswatthâma, son of Drona, to be revenged for the death of his father.

their own entrenched camp in apparently the most perfect security, having, as they supposed, not a single enemy remaining alive who was capable of working them any harm. The story of the revenge of Aswatthámа is as follows:—

Night of the eighteenth day of the war.

Now it was on the evening of the eighteenth and last day of the great war that the Pándavas had left Duryodhana on the plain of Kurukshetra, and that Krishna had visited Dhritaráshtra and Gándhárí at Hastinápur. And when Duryodhana was left by the Pándavas, he sat up in spite of his wound, and cleansed his face from blood and dust, and bound up his hair. Meantime Aswatthámа, Kripa, and Kritavarman perceived that the Pándavas had departed; and they came out of their place of concealment, and presented themselves to Duryodhana; and when the people whom Yudhishthira had stationed to take care of the Raja, saw those warriors approaching, they ran away. And when the three warriors came near to Duryodhana, and beheld his wretched condition, they rolled themselves in the dust and wept aloud. And Aswatthámа said to Duryodhana:—"You know how Dhrishta-dyumna slew my father Drona, and how with like treachery Bhíma has worked this evil upon you: If now you will lay your commands upon me, I will this very night go and slay every one of the Pándavas." Duryodhana then bade Kripa bring Aswatthámа before him; and Kripa took Aswatthámа's hand, and did as he was commanded. Duryodhana then said:—"I now appoint you, Aswatthámа, to be Chief in my room." And Raja Duryodhana turned to the other two, Kripa and Kritavarman, and said:—"Henceforth do you look upon Aswatthámа as you have hitherto looked upon me." And Aswatthámа kissed the ground, and uttered a prayer for the Raja; and the Raja said:—"The time of my death has now arrived, and it is my wish that you go this very night and slay all the Pándavas and their army, and bring me the head of Bhíma, that on beholding it I may go out of this world with-

Duryodhana wounded and alone upon the plain.

The three surviving warriors of his army visit him.

Their great grief.

Aswatthámа offers to slay the Pándavas that night.

Duryodhana appoints Aswatthámа Chief in command, and directs him to bring the head of Bhíma.

out regret." So saying, the strength of Duryodhana again failed him, and he fainted away from weakness and pain.

The three warriors leave Duryodhana upon the plain.

After Duryodhana had thus appointed Aswatthámá, son of Drona, to be Chief and Commander in his own stead, the three warriors took leave of the dying Raja and went their way. And they sat down under a tree to consult what they should do; and Aswatthámá said:—"I have already received the orders of the Raja to slay all the Pándavas this very night, and I must now do something or forfeit my head." And Aswatthámá saw that a large number of crows were roosting in the tree; and presently an owl came, and killed the crows one by one, without alarming the others. And Aswatthámá said to his two companions:—"This owl instructs me how to act towards my enemies if they be too numerous: It is to kill them by night one after the other, without making any noise that will disturb the rest: Give me your advice! Shall I go and fall upon our enemies, particularly upon Dhrishta-dyumna, who slew my father Drona?" Kripa replied:—"You are well aware that Duryodhana will now certainly die, and we have already done very much in his service: My opinion is that we should betake ourselves to Maháraja Dhritaráshtra and the Rání Gándhárí, and mention this scheme to them; and then if they order us to set about it we should do so, but that otherwise we should not move in the matter." And both Kripa and Kritavarman strongly urged Aswatthámá, but he would not listen to them, saying:—"These people have slain my father, and I am confident that they will all be sleeping after their victory; and if I do not watch this opportunity for revenge, I am very sure I shall never meet with another; and the grief that now overburthens my heart will never be assuaged as long as I live: If I conquer in this effort it is well; otherwise if I am killed I do not care: So do not interrupt me, but leave me to my purpose: In the beginning of the war I ought not to have taken up arms at all, because I am a Bráhman; and I should have occupied myself in study and prayer: But now that I have launched my life upon the torrent of wár, I must fight to some purpose: The least that

Aswatthámá sees an owl kill the sleeping crows.

Resolves to fall upon the Pándavas in like manner.

Kripa remonstrates.

Aswatthámá persists in revenging the slaughter of Drona.

I can do is to revenge my father's blood upon his enemies, and if I do not accomplish this, what can I say for myself?" Kripa replied:—"Since you are so sore upon your father's death, I pray you to remember that it is wrong to fall upon our foes unawares: Stay now till morning, and we will all three go and fight the Pándavas fairly, and see to whom the great god Siva will give the victory: Let us sleep now, and to-morrow set our faces to the battle." Aswattháma said:—"Rage will not let me sleep, but you may go to sleep and welcome." Kripa answered:—"I only advise you that it is a most enormous crime to slay people in their sleep; for the rest, do as you please." Aswattháma said:—"What you have counselled is very true, but however much I strive with myself, I cannot let the slaughter of my father go unpunished; and if I can but accomplish the death of Dhrishta-dyumna, let what may come to pass, be it going to heaven or going to hell."

Kripa proposes to wait till morning, and then to fight the Pándavas fairly.

Aswattháma refuses.

When Aswattháma had done speaking, he rose up and harnessed his horses to his chariot, and he put on his armour and drove off; and when Kripa and Kritavarman saw that advice had no effect upon him, they both followed after him. And Aswattháma went straight to the camp of the Pándavas. Now Raja Yudhishthira and his four brethren were at that time in the camp of the Kauravas, where they had found much spoil, and had taken up their quarters for the night; but their five sons by Draupadí, and all the other Chieftains of the army, were in their own camp, sleeping soundly in their several quarters in perfect security, and Draupadí also was sleeping in the camp. Now the camp of the Pándavas was surrounded by a deep trench, so contrived as to have only one gate or entrance; and there was no way of entry on any other side. And when Aswattháma came to the gate he saw that his two friends were following behind; and he requested them to stay and guard the entrance, whilst he went in and worked his revenge. He then passed through the gate without seeing any one; and went straightway to the quarters of Dhrishta-dyumna; and he saw Dhrishta-dyumna sleeping in splendour with all his women sitting

Aswattháma, followed by Kripa and Kritavarman, proceeds to the camp of the Pándavas.

Absence of the Pándavas in the camp of the Kauravas.

The single gateway.

Aswattháma leaves his two friends to guard the gate whilst he enters the camp.

Surprises Dhrishta-dyumna and slaughters him.

about him. And the women were thunderstricken at the approach of Aswatthâma, and he went and kicked Dhrishta-dyumna on the head, and awoke him from his sleep. Then Dhrishta-dyumna beheld Aswatthâma standing before him with a drawn sword, and he cried out:—"What cowardice is this to fall unawares upon a naked man!" And Aswatthâma struck him on the head with the back of the sword and broke his skull. Then the women began to scream and Aswatthâma rushed out, and no one knew who he was; but the people of Dhrishta-dyumna, who had come out with drawn swords on hearing the alarm, seeing a man rush out from the quarters of their Chief with a naked sword, ran hastily after him. And Aswatthâma killed a great number of them, and in their confusion many of them killed each other.

Screaming of the women, and general confusion.

Now it so happened that Draupadí had come into the camp that very night with her five sons whom she had borne to the Pándavas. And the young men were roused by the noise and alarm, and hearing that some one had killed Dhrishta-dyumna, who was the brother of their mother, they armed themselves and ran out to revenge him. And Aswatthâma fell upon the five sons of the Pándavas one after the other, and cut them down and slew them one after the other. And all the camp was in horrible confusion, and the people, as they rushed out from their several quarters, fell upon each other in their alarm, and fathers slew their sons and sons their fathers, and no man knew what was done either by himself or by the others. And every one who tried to escape by the gate of the camp was cut down and slain by Kripa and Krita-varman, whom Aswatthâma had posted there. And Aswatthâma found a great pile of firewood in the camp, and he set it on fire, and by the light of the flame he discovered and slew very many. And the horrors of that night surpassed all that had occurred during the eighteen days of the war, for Krishna and the Pándavas were sleeping far away in the quarters of Duryodhana, but all their followers and servants innumerable had been left behind in the camp of the Pándavas. And Aswatthâma cut off the heads of the five sons of

The five sons of the Pándavas rush out and are slain by Aswatthâma.

Fearful slaughter amongst the followers and servants of the Pándavas.

Aswatthâma escapes with the heads of the five sons of the Pándavas.

Draupadí, and carried them in his hands; and he made his escape through the gate of the camp, and joined Kripa and Kritavarman, and he boasted that he had avenged his father's blood, and proposed that they should return to Duryodhana, and acquaint him with their victory.

The three warriors return to Duryodhana.

After this the three warriors proceeded to the spot where they had left Duryodhana; and on their way they saw the wolves and the jackals devouring the bodies of those who had been slain in the great war, as they lay on the plain of Kurukshetra. When they approached the Raja, they found him fallen in the midst of blood and dust, but with a portion of his senses still remaining, and they sat down near him and began to weep. Then Duryodhana looked up and knew who they were, and he made signs with his hand to ask them whence they came. Aswattháma said:—"A curse be on us for being alive while you are in this state: Nevertheless, I have brought you something which even yet will give you joy." Hearing this, Duryodhana, notwithstanding his weakness, raised himself up and asked what he had got. Aswattháma answered:—"I have this night killed all the five Pándavas with their whole army, and here are their five heads." When Duryodhana heard these words he leaped up a full cubit from his place, and said:—"Do you really speak truth?" Then Aswattháma produced the heads, and Duryodhana desired that they should be shown to him one by one, which was done; and as the day had not fully dawned, and as the heads of the five sons of the Pándavas were perfect semblances of their respective fathers, Duryodhana thought as he beheld them in the hands of Aswattháma that they were the real heads of the Pándavas. And Duryodhana said:—"O Aswattháma, you have entirely taken away my grief, and now give me Bhíma's head into my own hand." And Aswattháma gave him the head of Bhíma's son; and Duryodhana took it and squeezed it with all his might, until the skull burst in. Duryodhana then said:—"Alas, Aswattháma, this can never be the head of Bhíma, which must be vastly too strong and hard to be broken between my hands." And Duryodhana then asked for the

Aswattháma passes off the heads of the sons for the heads of the fathers.

Exultation of Duryodhana.

Duryodhana takes the head of Bhíma's son and discovers the imposture by crushing the skull.

other heads, and examined them, and he perceived that they were the heads of the sons of Draupadí, and not those of her husbands; and he instantly fell into the most profound grief, and exclaimed:—"O Aswatthâma, you have done a horrid deed in slaying these harmless youths, and thus cutting short my whole race: Had these young men lived they would have preserved our name alive: My enmity was against the Pándavas, and not against these innocents."

Reproaches Aswatthâma for the murder of the innocent sons.

Saying this Duryodhana leaned his head upon the knees of Kritavarman and immediately expired. And the three warriors looked on and wept; and then reflecting that the Pándavas would soon discover the mischief of the night, and hasten to pursue them, they said to each other:—"Raja Duryodhana is now dead, and the Pándavas will presently come and take away his body, and this is no place for us." So each one mounted his chariot and fled.

Death of Duryodhana.

Flight of the three warriors.

Now when Aswatthâma had taken his revenge in the camp of the Pándavas, one quarter of the night still remained; and the charioteer of Dhrishta-dyumna mounted his master's chariot and set off for the camp of the Kauravas; and at daybreak he arrived at the quarters of Yudhishthira and his brethren, and informed them of all that had occurred. Then Raja Yudhishthira fell down in a swoon, and all his brethren thought him dead, and began most bitterly to bewail him; but Krishna consoled them, and said that Yudhishthira was certainly alive, and ordered some perfumed water to be brought, and sprinkled it plentifully on his face. After some time Yudhishthira came to himself, and turning his face towards Krishna, he said:—"What grief upon grief is this that comes on us every moment? This unfortunate Draupadí, who for thirteen years has endured for our sakes so many miseries and afflictions in the jungle, has no sooner come into the camp, and seen her sons and kinsmen, than the worst of all calamities has befallen her in the loss of her brother Dhrishta-dyumna and all her five sons: I much fear that this misfortune will cause her death." Krishna answered:—"The decree of the great god Síva is without remedy, and there is now no resource but resignation; and

Yudhishthira falls down in a swoon.

His lamentations.

Krishna consoles him.

it is your duty to return him thanks for your own preservation, and to live in hopes that he will bestow upon you other children." Raja Yudhishthira then sent his brother Nakula to bring Draupadí that he might comfort her. And when Draupadí came she was weeping very bitterly; and she said to her husbands:—"You have been wandering thirteen years in the desert and jungle in the hope at the end to enjoy the happiness of having your children about you; and now that you have seen Abhimanyu, and all my five sons, slain by your enemies, have you still the inclination to be Rajas, and to rule the world and flaunt upon thrones?" Yudhishthira and Krishna both replied to her, saying:—"You are the daughter of a great and wise Raja, and there are now no such women in the whole world as Kuntí and Gándhárí: You should first reflect upon the number of sons and brothers and other kinsmen they have lost in this great war, and not act like other women who have no reflection, and whose example leads you to make this outcry." Then Draupadí was somewhat consoled, and she replied:—"I feel myself tranquillized by your words, but can you with all your valour and prowess hold it allowable that the son of a Bráhman, like this Aswattháma, should slaughter my brother and sons with impunity?" She then turned to Bhíma, and said:—"Can you, stout as you are, permit Aswattháma to do all this mischief without suffering for it? If you do not bring me his head let me never see your face again." Yudhishthira answered her:—"Aswattháma is a Bráhman and the son of our tutor Drona: If he has committed any crimes, Vishnu, who is superior to all gods, will certainly avenge it on him; and what good will it do you to have him slain? Will it bring your sons and brother to life again? Leave him to God, for Vishnu will certainly revenge on him the wrong he has done to you and us." Draupadí said:—"I will not then insist upon his death, but I have heard that he has upon his head a precious jewel that will illuminate the darkest night and protect its possessor against every enemy; and that jewel

Yudhishthira sends for Draupadí.

Draupadí decries the idea of her husbands ruling as Rajas.

Consoled by Yudhishthira and Krishna.

Prays for revenge upon Aswattháma.

Yudhishthira represents that Aswattháma is the son of a Bráhman, and that revenge must be left to Vishnu.

Draupadí persists in having an amulet belonging to Aswattháma.

you must take from him and give it me, and the loss of it will be worse to him than the loss of his life."

Arjuna deprives Aswatthâma of the amulet, and gives it to Bhîma.

At these words of Draupadí, Bhíma mounted his chariot, and set off in pursuit of Aswatthâma, and Arjuna and Krishna followed after. And Arjuna and Krishna overtook Aswatthâma on the banks of the Ganges, and compelled him to give up the jewel. And the jewel was given to Bhíma.

Bhîma consoles Draupadí, and gives her the amulet.

And Bhíma went to Draupadí, and found her in tears, and he said to her:—"O Draupadí, do you not remember that day when the Kauravas insulted you and drove us all out of the city of Hastinápur, and when I came to you and bade you not to grieve, for that the day should come when their own wives should dishevel their hair in sorrow for their husbands? Then you said that you would not care if all your sons were slain, and all your husbands save one, so long as that one could revenge your affliction upon the Kauravas: Now all we five brethren are alive, and all the Kauravas are slain, and their wives are dishevelling their hair for them, according to your wish: What better then could have happened than for your sons to be slain in battle and so go to paradise? And here too is Aswatthâma's jewel for you, which you demanded; so take it, and give thanks to God." Then

Draupadí transfers the amulet to Yudhishthira.

Draupadí was entirely consoled by these words, and she took the jewel and gave it to Yudhishthira, saying:—"Yudhishthira is now the Mahâraja, and it becomes him to wear this jewel upon his head." So Yudhishthira wore the jewel on his head, and it appeared as resplendent as the sun, and all the people cried out:—"Long live Mahâraja Yudhishthira!"

Procession of the blind Mahâraja, with all the women of his household, to the plain of Kurukshetra.

Meanwhile Mahâraja Dhritaráshtra, together with his wife Gándhárí, and his brother's widow Kuntí, and all the women of the family, set out to behold the field of Kurukshetra where the great war had been fought between the Kauravas and the Pándavas. And as they journeyed they

Their interview with the three surviving warriors of the Kaurava armies.

met with the three warriors, Aswatthâma, Kripa, and Kritavarman, who had worked such terrible mischief in the camp of the Pándavas. And the three men said to Dhritaráshtra:—"Your sons engaged in a desperate war, and are now gone to the mansions of Indra; and our whole army is destroyed,

and we are the only three survivors." Kripa then said to Gándhárí:—"O Rání, your sons have fought so bravely, that they are now enjoying happiness and glory in the mansions of Indra: Lament not therefore for them! Nor have the Pándavas obtained an easy victory, for we three entered their camp in the night time, and slew their sons and many of their heroes: Take comfort therefore and permit us to depart, for we are flying for our lives from the Pándavas." So saying the three took their leave and proceeded towards the river Ganges; and on their way they parted from each other and followed three different directions; and then it was that Arjuna came up with Aswatthámа, and took from him the jewel.

The Kauravas said to have ascended to the heaven of Indra, because they had died fighting bravely.

The terrible picture which the foregoing narrative calls up to the imagination comprises, perhaps, some of the most graphic scenes in the history of the war. After many days of battle and slaughter, the plain of Kurukshetra was as silent as death. The sounding of war-shells, the beating of drums, the shouts of combatants, and the shrieks of the wounded, had passed away. The plain was covered with the corpses of the fallen; and amongst them the dying Chieftain of the Kauravas was lying upon the bare earth in mortal agony of mind and body, but thirsting like a wounded tiger for the blood of his enemies. Meantime, the triumphant Pándavas and their party were reposing in two camps on either side of the lake; the five brethren in the deserted camp of their defeated enemy, and their family and followers in their own camp. Of all the forces of the Kauravas none remained alive excepting Aswatthámа and his two associates; and at evening time these three warriors paid a visit to the prostrate Duryodhana. The talk then was only of revenge. The dying Raja passionately called upon Aswat-

Review of the foregoing story of the "Revenge of Aswatthámа."

Appearance of the plain of Kurukshetra on the evening of the last day of the war.

Passionate desire for revenge exhibited by the surviving Kauravas.

tháma to go and slay all the Pándavas, and, above all, to bring him the head of Bhíma, that he might die without sorrow; and Aswatthâma was equally prepared on his part to revenge the defeat of his Raja and the death of his father.

Comparison between the massacre by Aswatthâma and the most barbarous incidents in the war.

The subsequent vengeance of Aswatthâma forms, perhaps, one of the most barbarous incidents of the war. One horrible night has indeed been described, during which armies mangled and slaughtered each other beneath the glare of torchlight, and carried about with ghastly exultation the bleeding heads of friends and kinsmen. Again, the scene in which Bhíma drinks the blood of his murdered enemy is revolting to the last degree. But in both cases the passions of the combatants were stirred up to the highest pitch by the fury of the hand-to-hand struggle. The massacre, however, in the camp of the Pándavas was widely different. It was revenge inflicted upon sleeping and unarmed men, and upon sons instead of fathers; and, perchance, a more hateful form of vengeance has scarcely ever been perpetrated.[1]

Effect of the appearance of the owl devouring the birds upon the mind of Aswatthâma.

At sunset on the evening of the last day of the great war, Aswatthâma and his two associates were sitting beneath a tree. Aswatthâma was burning for wholesale vengeance, whilst smarting under a sense of weakness and helplessness. To a rude warrior, who implicitly believed in omens as lessons or warnings, the incident of an owl pouncing upon the birds, one at a time, as they were sleeping upon a tree, could not fail to produce a marvellous effect. "Thus," he cried, "will I slay the Pándavas!" He accordingly entered the Pándava camp, leaving

[1] A scene somewhat similar is to be found in Homer (Iliad, Book x.), where Diomed and Ulysses surprise the Thracian camp.

his two companions to guard the only means of entrance or exit. Then followed the attack upon the sleeping Dhrishta-dyumna, the slaughter of the naked man, the midnight panic, the horrible confusion of friends and foes, the escape of the murderer with the five heads of the sons of the Pándavas, and the dreary walk over the plain at early morning, when the first light of dawn just disclosed the wolves and jackals who were still feasting upon the bodies of the slain.

Pleasure of gratified revenge as displayed in the dying hour of Duryodhana.

But another scene was yet to follow, which no one could have portrayed or imagined saving an Oriental bard who could fully sympathize in the joy of gratified revenge. In the dim light of early morning the three warriors once more stood by the side of the dying Raja. For a brief interval Duryodhana was deceived. For a brief interval he was led to believe that the heads of his hated kinsmen were before him; and forgetting his wounds and losses, he rejoiced in the completeness of his revenge. He took the supposed skull of his murderer, and crushed it between his hands; and then the truth suddenly flashed upon him. The light of the rising sun fell upon the countenances of the dead, and he saw that the heads were those of the sons and not of the fathers. Thus his joy was turned to the deepest grief, and he leaned upon the knees of Kritavarman, and expired in an agony of sorrow.

Mythical character of the fable of Aswatthâma's amulet.

The concluding portion of the narrative of Aswatthâma's revenge has been so hopelessly falsified by the Brahmanical compilers that it is wanting not only in poetical justice but in human interest. The story of Aswatthâma's jewel or amulet appears

to be a myth. Probably in the original tradition Bhíma pursued Aswatthâma to the death, and brought his head to Draupadí. As, however, Aswatthâma is said to have been a Bráhman, the fable of the jewel has apparently taken the place of the story of the murder; as the slaughter of a Bráhman would be especially offensive to the Brahmanical compilers.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RECONCILIATION OF THE LIVING AND BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

A NEW scene now opens in the story of the Mahá Bhárata, namely, the reconciliation between the blind Maháraja and the men who had murdered his sons. This reconciliation is said to have been previously effected by Krishna during his night visit to Hastinápur; but, as already indicated, this portion of the narrative appears to be an interpolation of modern date. Like most of the mythical accounts of Krishna it contains some beautiful expressions of sympathy; but at the same time it is evident that such a mission would be ill-timed and useless. It is also worthy of remark that a similar visit is ascribed to the officious Vyása, and is of course equally mythical in its origin and character. Indeed, the language of both Krishna and Vyása is strained and artificial. It is impossible to conceive that parents, whose sons were still lying dead upon the field of battle, could be consoled by the assurance that those sons had perished in consequence of their injustice; or by the still more extravagant assurance that the murderers would take the places of those sons, and would prove themselves to be even more loyal and

Attempts to reconcile the Maháraja with the Pándavas.

Mythical efforts of Krishna and Vyása.

Impossibility of a real reconciliation between parents and the murderers of their sons.

obedient. Such an idea may be justly regarded as the ignorant conception of some Brahmanical compiler, who had led a life of celibacy, and who was utterly unable to realize that enduring affection and unreasoning devotion which the true mother feels for the worst of her sons. But the story of the interview between the Mahárája and the Pándavas on the day after the battle seems to fall under a different category. The Pándavas were victors who had established their claim to the Raj against the sons of the Mahárája by force of arms, but who were yet desirous of appearing to be on good terms with the Mahárája whose sovereignty they would be expected to acknowledge. The Mahárája, on the other hand, although nominally the Sovereign, was virtually the representative of the defeated party, and his very life was at the mercy of the conquerors. Thus whilst a real reconciliation was perhaps impossible, a feigned reconciliation was absolutely indispensable to both parties. Accordingly, it will be seen that the Pándavas prostrated themselves in turns at the feet of the Mahárája and the Rání, and that some sort of explanation or apology was offered and accepted; but the real feelings of the bereaved parents will be readily perceived from an attempt of the Mahárája to crush Bhíma in his embrace, and from the sudden shriek of the Rání that the smell of her son was upon them.

Want of family sympathy on the part of the Brahmanical compilers.

Interview between the Pándavas and the Mahárája on the day after the war.

Necessity for a feigned reconciliation.

Real feelings of the Mahárája and Rání.

Narrative of the reconciliation.

The narrative of this reconciliation, real or feigned, is as follows:—

The Pándavas, accompanied by Krishna, go out and meet the Mahárája.

Meantime Yudhishthira had heard that Mahárája Dhritaráshtra had left the city of Hastinápur for the field of battle; and he went forward to meet him, accompanied by his brethren, and by Krishna, and by Draupadí, and by all the

women of Dhrishta-dyumna. And after a while, Yudhishthira saw the Maháraja approaching; and all the women of the Kauravas accompanied the Maháraja, and rent the air with their lamentations; and Yudhishthira passed by the women, and went on to the Maháraja, and fell at his feet. Then the other Pándavas, each one declaring his name to the blind Maháraja, fell at his feet in like manner. And Dhritaráshtra embraced Yudhishthira, and said:—"Where is Bhíma?" Now as it was well known that Bhíma had slain Duryodhana, as well as a great number of the sons of Dhritaráshtra, Krishna had been fearful of introducing him, lest the aged Maháraja should vent his wrath upon him. And it so happened that in former days Duryodhana had ordered to be made an image of Bhíma, upon which image he was accustomed to try his strength; and when the Maháraja called for Bhíma, Krishna gave him this image, and said:—"Here is Bhíma." Then the Maháraja opened his arms, and under pretence of embracing Bhíma, he crushed the image to pieces; and he then fell down exhausted and fainting, with blood issuing from his mouth. After a long time he came to himself and began to weep; and when those around him asked why he wept, he replied:—"Bhíma was as one of my own sons, and his death has not brought any of my other sons to life, and I have slain him to no purpose." Then Sanjaya, his charioteer, who stood by, told him what Krishna had done, and how it was not Bhíma that he had crushed, but the iron image which Duryodhana had made. And Dhritaráshtra turned to Krishna, and said:—"O Krishna, you have done excellently well." He then called for the five brethren one by one, and again embraced them; and when Bhíma presented himself, the Maháraja laughed, and said:—"What if I should now give you another squeeze?" Bhíma replied:—"I am your slave, and if you order me I will be my own executioner." Dhritaráshtra said:—"You are now all my sons, and the only remaining children of my brother Pándu: All that has happened to my sons was of their own seeking, and arose from their envy against you." And Dhritaráshtra began to weep again, and Yudhish-

Prostrate themselves at the feet of the Maháraja.

The Maháraja calls for Bhíma, and receives his image in his stead.

Crushes the image to pieces in his wrath against the murderer of his sons.

Repents the deed, and weeps.

Undeceived by Sanjaya.

Embraces the five Pándavas in turn.

The reconciliation.

thira and Krishna and all the others began to weep with him.

Affecting scene between the Pándavas and the Rání Gándhárí.

After this Yudhishthira and his brothers, together with Krishna, took leave of the Maháraja and proceeded to wait upon Gándhárí. Yudhishthira advanced and kissed her feet, and she took him in her arms, and they both wept aloud. Gándhárí then said:—"The smell of Duryodhana is upon you all;" and screaming out she fell down in a swoon.

Yudhishthira's excuses.

When she recovered Yudhishthira said to her:—"O mother, it must be clear to you that we had no alternative in the affair of Duryodhana; for what could we do when he would not allow us bread to eat as the condition of our service?"

Gándhárí's resignation.

Gándhárí replied:—"Say nothing, O Raja, about it, for I know that you speak only what is true and right, and that all which has befallen my sons was but the fruit of their refusal to take the advice of myself and my husband; and now that they are gone, may God preserve you to me in the room of Duryodhana." Arjuna then came and kissed her feet, as did Bhíma also; and Gándhárí said to Bhíma:—

She reproaches Bhíma for having drank the blood of Duhsásana.

"You drank the blood of my son Duhsásana."

Bhíma's denial.

Bhíma replied:—"No, I did not drink it: I took some of it in my hands and rubbed it about my face, but I did not drink it; and I only said that I drank it for the sake of frightening the others."

Yudhishthira takes all the blame upon himself.

At this moment Raja Yudhishthira stepped forward, and laid his head at the feet of Gándhárí, and said:—"O mother, it was I who killed your sons, and do you lay all the blame upon me, and say nothing to the others."

Gándhárí then asked for Draupadí, and said to her:—"You and I are in the same affliction, for your sons also are slain; but what can I do? There is no remedy against the behests of the great god Siva."

Gándhárí sends the Pándavas to their mother Kuntí.

She then said to Yudhishthira and his brethren:—"It is now nearly fourteen years since your mother Kuntí had the pleasure of seeing you: Go now and see her!"

Joy of Kuntí.

And the five Pándavas went accordingly; and when Kuntí heard that her sons were coming she fainted for joy; and when Yudhishthira and his brethren came up and found her in that condition, Yudhishthira took hold of his mother's hand, and after a time she came to herself.

And the sons of Kuntí came and laid their heads at her feet one by one, and she embraced and kissed each of them in turn, and wept at seeing the wounds they had received in the great war. Then Draupadí approached her, and Kuntí, knowing that her children had been so lately slain, wept for her; and Draupadí laid her head at Kuntí's feet and fainted away, and when she recovered, both the ladies wept so abundantly that all the bystanders were moved to tears. Meantime Gándhárí came forward with all the widows of her sons who had been slain, and she said to Draupadí:— "Weep not, my daughter, for your sorrows are not greater than mine: We cannot tell what is decreed by fate: Thank God that the war is over, and weep not for the dead: Let us now perform the necessary rites for the souls of the departed."

Her five sons lay their heads at her feet.

Affecting meeting of Draupadí and Kuntí.

Gándhárí piously consoles Draupadí.

The foregoing narrative requires no comment. A general truthfulness to human nature is perceptible throughout. The story of the image said to have been made of Bhíma may appear somewhat apocryphal, but yet is not altogether beyond the bounds of probability.[1]

Review of the foregoing narrative.

The next scene, which comprises the lamentations of the women on the field of battle, and the subsequent burning of the dead, is very affecting. One point however is open to question. If the war really lasted eighteen days, and the general burning of the bodies did not take place until the day after the conclusion of the war, the corpses of those who were slain in the earlier battles must have lain in a state of perfect putrefaction. The question, however, is

Narrative of the funeral ceremonies on the field of battle.

Difficulty as regards the war lasting eighteen days.

[1] Duryodhana is said to have made an iron image of Bhíma to try his strength upon it; or he may have made an ordinary figure-head to knock about as a manifestation of his hatred towards the original. In Mr Dickens' novel of "The Old Curiosity Shop," Quilp, the evil character of the story, purchases an old wooden figure of an Admiral, to represent Kit, whom he hates; and he strikes and mutilates the image accordingly. The incident is true to human nature, and merely exhibits the natural force of the imagination. A mob will in like manner burn the effigy of the object of their detestation.

not an important one, and may be left unsolved. The narrative is as follows:—

Sad procession of the women to the plain of Kurukshetra.

After this all the women dishevelled their hair, and offered up loud lamentations, and proceeded to the fatal plain of Kurukshetra; and there they beheld the dead bodies of their husbands and fathers, sons and brothers, who had been slain in the war. And each of the women went and sat down by the remains of him whom she had most loved, and whose death had caused her the greatest affliction. And Gándhárí and Kuntí, accompanied by Yudhishthira and Krishna, went to the dead body of Duryodhana; and when Gándhárí saw that it was her own son, she fell down in a swoon; and after a long interval she revived, and said:—"The wise and the learned always used to sit round this son of mine, and nearly all the Rajas of the earth took their stations near him, and prided themselves on it as a promotion, but this night the jackals alone have been his courtiers." The widow of Duryodhana likewise came with her hair dishevelled, and placed her husband's head upon her lap, and seated herself there; and Gándhárí said:—"This woman, whom neither sun nor moon were once worthy to look upon, see how she now sits here bare-headed!" There too was the widow of the son of Duryodhana, and the widow of Karna, and the widow of Abhimanyu, and many others; and Gándhárí and all those widows bemoaned their several relations with so many tears, that none of those who were present could refrain from joining them in weeping.

The women sit by the dead bodies of their husbands.

Lamentations of Gándhárí over her son Duryodhana.

Lamentations of the widows.

Performance of the funeral rites for the slain.

After this, Maháraja Dhritaráshtra said to Yudhishthira:—"My son, be pleased now to order that all the dead bodies should be burned." And Dhritaráshtra and Yudhishthira jointly requested Vidura to superintend the performance of the ceremony. And Vidura, who was the uncle of the Kauravas and Pándavas, and Sanjaya, the charioteer of the Maháraja, and Yuyutsu, the only surviving son of the Maháraja, and Dhaumya, the family priest of the Pándavas, all went out together to the field of battle. And they collected a large quantity of sandal and other odoriferous woods, and sweet oils, to form a pile on which to burn the

Collection of materials for the burning.

bodies of the principal warriors, such as Duryodhana, Karna, Abhimanyu, Drona, and others; and they also collected many thousand mule-loads of faggots and oil to burn the bodies of those of inferior note. And they ordered all the surviving charioteers of those Rajas who had been slain, to go through the plain and point out the corpses of their respective masters, so that such Rajas might be burned separately according to their rank. And they took with them a thousand cart-loads of cloths, some fine and others coarse, to wrap up the dead bodies before burning. Then Vidura, and those appointed with him, went over the plain of Kurukshetra; and they first took up with all reverence and ceremony the corpse of Duryodhana and burned it. Next the Rajas of the first rank were wrapped in fine linen and burned with perfumes; and amongst these were the other sons of Dhritaráshtra, and the sons of Draupadí, and Abhimanyu, and Drona, and Karna, and the greater Rajas, such as Raja Drupada and his son Dhrishta-dyumna, and Raja Viráta, and Raja Jayadratha, and Raja Sálya, and many others. When this burning had been accomplished they kindled a mighty fire and burned all the remaining bodies therein. After this, Yudhishthira and his brethren, accompanied by Krishna, went to bathe in the Ganges according to the rule; and taking up a handful of water for each kinsman that had been slain in the battle, they sprinkled it in the name of the deceased; and Yudhishthira, at the request of his mother Kuntí, sprinkled some water in the name of Karna. And Raja Yudhishthira and his brother Arjuna grieved very much for the death of Karna; and the Raja ordered great charities to be distributed in the name of Karna, and he took under his own protection all Karna's women and young children, and provided for all his remaining dependents. And he called for one of Karna's sons, who was sixteen years of age, and wept in his presence very much for the death of Karna; and he gave him a large separate establishment and estate, and paid more attention to him than he did to his own sons; and he placed him under Arjuna to teach him archery and all other military exercises. And he showed also great tenderness and affec-

Dead bodies of the Rajas recognized by their charioteers.

Burning of the Rajas of the first rank.

Burning of the remaining bodies.

Bathing in the Ganges, and sprinkling of water.

Sorrow of Yudhishthira and Arjuna for the death of Karna.

Kindness of Yudhishthira, to all the widows, children, and dependents of Karna.

tion to the rest of Karna's children, and entertained his widows with all the kindness of a near kinsman. But when the principal wife of Karna, and mother of most of his children, heard of the death of her husband, she heaved a deep sigh and expired; and the rest of Karna's widows were better provided for by Yudhishthira than even his own women, and they had regular appointments for their maintenance.

Death of the chief wife of Karna.

Review of the foregoing narrative of the burning of the slain.

Refers to an ante-Brahmanic period.

The picture furnished by the foregoing narrative of the burning of the slain apparently refers to a very ancient period of Hindú history. The prominent features are indicated with a realism which seems to have appertained to the original tradition; —the poor widows, with their long black hair dishevelled over their faces, sitting in an agony of grief by the corpses of those they loved; the charioteers searching over the plain for the remains of their masters; the dead bodies wrapped in cloths and burning with oils and perfumes upon the funeral piles.[2] But there is no reference to the hateful Satí,

No reference to Satí nor satisfactory allusion to the Bráhmans.

[2] A more detailed account of the funeral ceremonies of the ancient Hindús will be found in the Rámáyana, and will consequently appear in the second volume of the present work. The whole ceremony bears a remarkable resemblance to the burning of Hector, which has thus been felicitously translated by the Earl of Derby (Iliad, Book xxiv.):—

"At length the aged Priam gave command:
'Haste now, ye Trojans, to the city bring
Good store of fuel.' * * *
He said:—and they the oxen and the mules
Yoked to the wains, and from the city thronged:
Nine days they laboured, and brought back to Troy
Good store of wood; but when the tenth day's light
Upon the earth appeared, weeping, they bore
Brave Hector out; and on the funeral pile
Laying the glorious dead, applied the torch.
While yet the rosy-fingered morn was young
Round noble Hector's pyre the people pressed:
When all were gathered round, and closely thronged,
First on the burning mass, as far as spread
The range of fire, they poured the ruddy wine,
And quenched the flames: his brethren then and friends
Weeping, the hot tears flowing down their cheeks,

no burning of the widows with their deceased husbands; and it is somewhat remarkable that the Bráhmans do not appear to have officiated upon the occasion. The only point however which requires explanation, is the extraordinary liberality and kindness displayed by Yudhishthira towards the family of Karna. It should however be remembered that according to the myth already indicated, Karna was the son of Kuntí before her marriage to Pandú; and consequently these details may have been inserted to prove that Yudhishthira was not wanting in duty to the family of his deceased elder brother.

Account of the liberality and kindness displayed by Yudhishthira towards the family of Karna ascribed to a mythical origin.

Collected from the pile the whitened bones;
These in a golden casket they enclosed,
And o'er it spread soft shawls of purple dye;
Then in a grave they laid it, and in haste
With stone in ponderous masses covered o'er;
And raised a mound."

In the historic period a considerable refinement was introduced by the Greeks, inasmuch as the bodies of the slain were not burned but buried. Thus the Athenians who fell at Marathon were interred on the field of battle; whilst the bodies of those who fell in the first year of the Peloponnesian war were preserved, and ultimately arranged in coffins of cypress wood, according to tribes, and publicly buried with every honour in the fairest suburb of the city.—Thucydides, Book ii. c. 34, *et seq.*

CHAPTER XV.

THE INSTALLATION OF RAJA YUDHISHTHIRA.

Narrative of the installation of Yudhishthira as Raja under the nominal sovereignty of Mahárája Dhritaráshtra.

AFTER the burning of the slain, Yudhishthira and his brethren proceeded in triumph from the plain of Kurukshetra to the city of Hastinápur, and there Yudhishthira was inaugurated as Raja in the room of Duryodhana, under the nominal sovereignty of the Maháraja. The details of this procession, and the subsequent ceremonies of installation demand no preliminary explanation, and may be simply narrated as follows:—

Disinclination of Yudhishthira to be appointed Raja.

Now when Raja Yudhishthira beheld the dead bodies of his kinsmen, who had been slain on the plain of Kurukshetra, his heart failed him, and he said that he would not accept the Raj, but would retire into the jungle, and spend the remainder of his days in religious devotion; but those around him offered many topics of consolation to him, and after a while his grief left him, and he prepared himself to undertake the duties of Raja under his uncle, Maháraja Dhritaráshtra.

Triumphant procession from the plain of Kurukshetra.

So when all things had been made ready for his progress from the field of Kurukshetra to the city of Hastinápur, he ascended a chariot which was drawn by sixteen white mules. And Bhíma took the reins and seated himself as his charioteer, and bards and eulogists surrounded his chariot on all sides and recited his praises; and Arjuna held the royal umbrella over his head, and his two younger brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva, walked one on each side of his

chariot, and fanned him with chámaras of fine hair. And Yuyutsu, the only surviving son of Dhritaráshtra, followed in another white chariot; and Krishna and Sátyaki accompanied the procession in like manner in a chariot of gold. And the blind Maháraja and the Rání Gándhárí went before Yudhishthira in a vehicle carried by men; and Kuntí, Draupadí, and all the other ladies betook themselves to different vehicles, and followed the procession under the protection of Vidura.

Grand entry into the city of Hastinápur.

In this grand array Raja Yudhishthira entered the city of Hastinápur; and he was accompanied by all his friends and kinsmen, whilst the bards and eulogists marched before him and sounded his praises. Meantime the people of the city decorated the road with flags and garlands, and came out in their best attire to receive the new Raja; and thousands of people thronged the entrance of the palace to welcome the approach of Yudhishthira, whilst all the ladies of the palace in like manner welcomed Draupadí. And Yudhishthira acknowledged the acclamations of the multitude, and received the blessings of the Bráhmans; and he then descended from his chariot, and went into the inner apartments, and worshipped the family gods with offerings of sandal, garlands, and jewels. Having thus performed his thanksgivings to the household deities he returned to the palace gate, and with the assistance of Dhaumya and the Maháraja, he distributed suitable presents of jewels, cows, and cloths amongst the Bráhmans. Now a Rákshasa, named Chárváka, had disguised himself as a mendicant Bráhman, and mingled with the crowd; and having been a warm friend of Duryodhana he was desirous of reviling the Pándavas. And when the acclamations of the multitude had ceased, Chárváka arose and said:—"O Yudhishthira, listen to me! These Bráhmans have made me their spokesman to reproach you for your ignominious deeds in killing your nearest and dearest kinsmen: I cannot discover what advantage you have derived from committing such crimes; your life must be now a burden to you, and the sooner you die the better will it be for all." At this speech all the as-

Yudhishthira arrives at the palace.

Worships the family gods.

Distributes gifts amongst Bráhmans.

Reviled by Chárváka, a Rákshasa disguised as a Bráhman.

Rage of the real Bráhmans, who declare their allegiance to Yudhishthira.

sembled Bráhmans were enraged, but they hung down their heads with shame and said nothing. And Raja Yudhishthira was very much dejected at what Chárváka had said, and in very mild terms he asked the Bráhmans for forgiveness, and requested them not to put him to shame, and even offered to put an end to his own life if they desired it. The Bráhmans replied:—"O Raja, we have said nothing against you, but wish you all joy and happiness: This person is not a Bráhman; he is a wicked friend of Duryodhana in disguise: His name is Chárváka, and he is a Rákshasa by birth: Listen not to him, for he has spoken falsehoods!"

Chárváka burnt to death by the angry eyes of the Bráhmans.

So saying, the Bráhmans looked upon Chárváka with angry eyes, and he fell upon the ground like a tree struck by lightning, and was burnt to ashes upon the spot.

Gratification of Yudhishthira at the acquiescence of the Bráhmans in his inauguration.

Now when Yudhishthira saw that the Bráhmans were truly desirous that he should rule the Raj, he was much pleased; and he cast aside all melancholy, and seated himself upon the golden throne with a cheerful heart, and with his face turned towards the east. And in front of him sat Krishna and Sátyaki upon seats of gold; whilst upon either side of him sat Bhíma and Arjuna upon golden carpets. At a little distance off sat his mother Kuntí upon a throne of ivory, with Nakula and Sahadeva on each side of her. And Maháraja Dhritaráshtra and his younger brother Vidura, and the priest Dhaumya, took their seats upon carpets as bright as flame; and near the Maháraja sat his Rání Gándhárí, and his only surviving son Yuyutsu. And when they were all seated, Yudhishthira was solemnly inaugurated Raja by Dhaumya the Bráhman, who was the family priest of the Pándavas. And rice, which had been burnt by the sun, and white flowers, and pieces of earth, and gold, silver, and precious stones, were all brought before the new Raja, and he touched them according to the custom. And fire, and milk, and honey, and ghee, and the sacred shell, and leaves and twigs of sacred trees, were all brought in like manner, and duly placed before Raja Yudhishthira. And golden pots, and silver pots, and copper pots, and earthen pots, and pots made of precious stones, were all filled with

Enthroned facing the East.

Presence of his relations and friends at his inauguration.

Ceremony of inauguration performed by Dhaumya the Bráhman.

Symbolical rites.

Pots of water from the sacred rivers.

water from all the sacred places, and arranged for the ceremony. And Dhaumya, the family priest of the Pándavas, solemnly performed all the rites of inauguration under the direction of Krishna. And Dhaumya prepared a high place on which to offer sacrifice, and he kindled the fire for the offerings. And a tiger's skin was opened out before the sacrificial fire, and Yudhishthira and his wife Draupadí took their seats thereon; and Dhaumya prepared the homa for the propitiation of the gods, and poured it upon the sacred fire. After this the five purifying articles which are produced from the sacred cow, namely, the milk, the curds, the ghee, the urine, and the ordure, were brought up by Krishna, and the Maháraja, and by the four brethren of Yudhishthira, and poured by them over the heads of Yudhishthira and Draupadí: and then, in like manner, they all brought up the pots of sacred waters, and poured the waters over the heads of the new Raja and his wife. And when this was done the music began to sound, and fill the air with harmonious strains, and the bards and eulogists raised their voices and chaunted aloud the praises of Raja Yudhishthira and the glory of his mighty forefathers.

High place prepared for sacrifice.

Yudhishthira and Draupadi seated upon the tiger's skin.

Offering of the homa.

The five purifying articles poured upon Yudhishthira and Draupadi.

Pots of sacred water poured over Yudhishthira and Draupadi.

Music sounded.

Bards and eulogists chaunt the praises of Yudhishthira.

Now all this while Raja Yudhishthira was in no way moved by all the honours thus bestowed upon him. Neither did he exult in his inauguration, nor was he elevated by the praises of the bards and eulogists. He underwent all the ceremonies with calmness and patience, and manifested neither signs of sorrow nor signs of joy. And when the rites had all been performed, he rose up and distributed without stint, and in the greatest profusion, the richest and most valuable presents to all the Bráhmans who had assembled at his inauguration.

Perfect equanimity of Yudhishthira.

His patience during the ceremonies.

Distributes large gifts to the Bráhmans.

In this manner Yudhishthira was installed Raja in his ancestral Raj of Bhárata; and when the installation was over, and the gifts had been distributed, he addressed the Bráhmans in the following language:—"The sons of Pándu, whether they possess any good qualities or not, must still consider themselves very fortunate, O Bráhmans, at being so much praised by you; and it is proper that you

Yudhishthira's address to the Bráhmans.

Entreats the Bráhmans to accept the rule of Maháraja Dhritaráshtra.

should grant to myself and my brethren any favour which we may ask of you: Maháraja Dhritaráshtra is our father, and we adore him as we do our most superior gods: If, therefore, you wish to serve me or my brethren, you cannot do that better than by placing yourselves under the rule of the Maháraja, and endeavouring to promote his welfare: I myself live only for that purpose, now that I have slain all my kinsmen; and if you have any regard for me or my party, you will show the same respect to the Maháraja as you did whilst the Kauravas were alive: He is our superior lord, and the ruler of the Pándavas and their Raj: Forget not my special request that you should serve him." So saying Yudhishthira dismissed the Bráhmans.

Review of the foregoing narrative.

Two events distinct from each other.

The foregoing narrative refers to two distinct descriptions, which may perhaps be best considered separately; namely, first the procession from the field of battle to the royal palace at Hastinápur; and, secondly, the inauguration of Yudhishthira as Yuvaraja, or as a Raja ruling the people in the name of the Maháraja.

First, the triumphant procession of the Pándavas.

Description of the umbrella and chámara as emblems of sovereignty.

The description of the return of Yudhishthira to the palace will be readily realized by all who are familiar with the Courts of Hindú Rajas. The especial emblems of Hindú sovereignty are the umbrella and the chámara. The umbrella may be called a canopy; but it in no way resembles the canopy which is raised over the throne in European Courts; but may be described as a large umbrella, richly decorated with gold and jewels, and often exceedingly beautiful in design and workmanship. The chámara is the tail of a Thibet ox, which is fixed into a handle, and employed to drive away flies. The picture is now complete. The Raja sitting in state in a chariot or car drawn by sixteen white horses. The royal umbrella held over his head,

Picture of an ancient Hindú procession.

glittering and sparkling in the bright light of an Indian sun. A chámara of white hairs waving on either side to keep off the flies, and at the same time adding pomp and significance to the scene. The bards and eulogists accompanying the chariot, chaunting in barbarous strains the praises of the new Sovereign, as the Raja of Rajas, the descendant of the gods, the wise, the mighty, and the victorious. Other Chieftains follow in chariots, or in nondescript seats borne on the shoulders of men. Glittering flags of every variety are adding to the gaiety of the scene; and garlands of flowers are hanging from every house and tree, as special signs of popular rejoicing.[1]

Story of Chárváka a later interpolation intended as a side blow against the sect of Chárvákas.

The protest of Chárváka after Yudhishthira's arrival at the palace is somewhat curious. He is said to have been a Rákshasa in disguise, and a warm friend of Duryodhana, but he also stands as the representative of a later heterodox sect, known as the Chárvákas. It seems, therefore, not improbable that the reference to Chárváka is an interpolation of the Brahmanical compilers, introduced for the controversial purpose of exhibiting the heretic as the ally of Duryodhana and enemy of Yudhishthira, who was justly destroyed by the angry glance of the Bráhmans.

[1] Such scenes as those described above are frequent at Hindú Courts, or at audiences granted to Rajas by the Viceroy of India. The Raja and his attendant Chieftains are arrayed in cloth of gold, and radiant with jewels. The old Hindú car, or rath, may be replaced by an elephant or a European barouche; but the chámaras, the eulogists, and the banners are all there. Other insignia seem to have been added in modern times, such as Chobdars or silver sticks, and above all a large hookah. The hookah indeed is regarded as a special emblem of dignity, and is kept alight, and occasionally smoked during the progress; the hookah-bearer carrying the bowl on the seat by the side of the coachman, whilst the Raja sits in the carriage and smokes through a long and richly ornamented tube.

Secondly, the installation of Yudhishthira.

Doubtful authenticity of the details.

The description of the inauguration of Yudhishthira is very suggestive. Most of the ceremonies are still performed at the installation of modern Rajas; and indeed the Mahá Bhárata is generally regarded as an authority upon the subject. It is, however, difficult to say whether the ceremonies were actually performed in the case of Yudhishthira, or whether they are not to be treated as later interpolations, introduced for the purpose of bringing the old tradition into conformity with modern Brahmanical rites.

Apparent origin of the various ceremonies.

The enthroning of Yudhishthira with his face towards the east, or sunrise, may probably be a relic of the old worship of the Sun. The introduction of Krishna appears mythical for reasons already stated. The touching of rice, flowers, earth, gold, silver, and jewels seems to be an assertion of sovereignty. The offering of milk, honey, and ghee is Vedic. The sacred shell is an emblem of the god Vishnu. The leaves and twigs of trees, and the pots of water from sacred rivers, appear to belong to some old fetische rites which have been adopted by the Bráhmans. The tiger's skin is a reference to the god Siva, who is generally represented as sitting or lying upon the skin in question. The offering of the homa, and the pouring of the five purifying articles produced from the cow upon the heads of the Raja and Rání, are Brahmanical rites, but of very ancient origin, being connected with the primitive worship of the cow as the giver of milk, butter, and curds. The description of the patience of Yudhishthira, his perfect tranquillity, and his profound respect for the Bráhmans, may perhaps be treated as interpolations of the Brahmanical compilers. The significance, however, of these several rites can only be fully explained by

reference to the different religions, and will accordingly be discussed hereafter.[1]

[1] The following description of the ceremonies to be performed at the inauguration of Rajas is taken from the Agni Purâna.

"A Raja should appoint a family priest and astrologer, wise counsellors, and a Râni possessed of due accomplishments; at the period appointed by the astrologer or upon the death of his predecessor, he should make preparations for his coronation. The person to be crowned should be bathed with Tila (sesimum orientale) and white mustard (that is, with water in which these have been steeped), and the astrologer and Purohita should proclaim his title when he should be seated on an auspicious throne; he should then hold out hopes of prosperity to his subjects, and set prisoners at liberty. Previous to the coronation the family priest should perform the Ain-drisanti, a sacrifice made in honour of Indra to secure prosperity. The Raja should fast the day before the coronation, and on the next offer oblations upon the fire which is upon the altar, attended with the recitation of mantras sacred to Vishnu, Indra, Surya, Viswadeva, and Chandra. This ceremony tends to prolong the life, and is productive of religious merit and prosperity. The golden water-pot called Aparâgita, or tending to render one invisible, which is placed on the right side of the sacrificial fire, and receives the remains of the oblations of ghee, should be worshipped with flowers and sandal-paste. Good fortune attends the Raja if the flame turn round to the right, if it appear like pure gold when heated, occasion a sound like that of a number of cars, or of the clouds; when there issues no smoke, but a fragrant vapour, and when it is of the form of a swastika (particular kind of temple, etc.); if the flame be clear and raging, without emitting any sparks; and if no cats, deer, or birds, pass between the fire and the performer of the ceremony.

"The Raja should cleanse his head with earth brought from mountain-tops; his two ears with earth from the tops of white ant-hillocks, and his face with that of a Vishnu Maridapa, or a house in which that deity is worshipped. He should cleanse his neck with earth from Indra's temple; his bosom with that from the court-yard of the palace; his right hand with that raised by the tusks of elephants; his left hand with that raised by the horns of bulls; his back with the earth of a tank; his belly with that of a place where two rivers meet; his two sides with that of the two opposite sides of a river; his buttocks with that of the door of a brothel; his thighs with the earth of the spot on which the sacrifice has been performed; his knees with that of a cow-house; his legs with that of a stable; and his feet with that from the wheels of a car.

"The Raja being then seated on a splendid throne, his head should be washed with Pancha Gavya (milk, curds, ghee, and the urine and dung of a cow). The four ministers of the Raja belonging to the four classes shall afterwards bathe the Raja, viz. the Brâhman with ghee filled in a golden pot, standing on the east side; the Kshatriya with milk filled in a silver pot, standing on the south side; the Vaisya with curds filled in a copper pot, standing on the west side; and the Sudra with water filled in an earthen pot, standing on the north side. An eminent Brâhman should then bathe the Raja and Râni with honey; a Brâhman, who sings the Sama Veda, should bathe them with water and some kusa grass; and the family priest, having entrusted the preservation of the sacrificial fire to the care of a Sadasya (a bystander, who has to notice and correct mistakes), and repairing to the golden pot in which the remains of the oblations of ghee have been received, should bathe the Raja, repeating the incantations which secure the good

fortune of Rajas. The priest should then return to the altar, and a Bráhman, who sings the Yajur Veda, should bathe the Raja with water in a golden pot, having a hundred holes, mixed with Sarvanshadi and Mahanshadi (certain classes of drugs), ghee, sandal-paste, flowers, the common citron, gems, and kusa grass. The water is to be purified by mixing it with the above articles one by one, attended with the recitation of their respective mantras from the Yajur Veda. A Bráhman, who sings the Atharva Veda, should afterwards mark the head and throat of the Raja with the yellow pigment, called Gorachana.

"After this a great number of Bráhmans having assembled together should place a pot filled with Sarvanshadi (a class of drugs), and water brought from all the Tirtahs (places of pilgrimage), before the Raja, whilst he shall be fanned with the tails of the Bosgrunnies, and music and singing be carried on. The Raja shall behold the pot, a looking-glass, some ghee, and some other fortunate omens. He should then worship Vishnu, Brahma, Indra, and other gods; also the planets and elephants. The Purohita being seated on a bed covered with a tiger's hide, the Raja should present him with a dish of curds and honey, and have his turban bound. The turban of the Raja, seated on a bed covered with the hides of a bull, cat, elephant, lion, and tiger, should then be bound. The door-keeper is to point out to him his ministers, etc. The Raja should offer cars, goats, sheep, houses, and other gifts to his Purohita and the astrologer, and give away various other things to other Bráhmans. Having gone round the sacrificial fire, made obeisance to his spiritual tutor, and touched the back of a bull, he is to present his Guru with cows and clothes. Let him then proceed along the main street on a horse or an elephant, attended by his forces, and having circumambulated the city re-enter its limits. He is to entertain all the persons present, and then dismiss them."—Wilson's MSS. *in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.*

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HORSE SACRIFICE OF RAJA YUDHISHTHIRA.

Performance of an Aswamedha contemplated by Yudhishthira.

WHEN Yudhishthira was established in the Raj of Bhárata, he attempted the celebration of a great sacrifice known as the Aswamedha, or sacrifice of a horse. This extraordinary rite bore some resemblance to the Rajasúya sacrifice, which he had already performed when he and his brethren had cleared the jungle of Khándava-prastha and founded the Raj of Indra-prastha. But whilst the Aswamedha seems to have been an assertion of sovereignty over conquered Rajas, it was invested with an importance and significance which were wanting in the Rajasúya. Indeed the performance of an Aswamedha was a task of peculiar difficulty, whilst it was the greatest rite that a Raja could perform. By the Rajasúya a Chieftain seems to have asserted his sovereignty over a new and independent Raj. But by the Aswamedha he was popularly supposed by an ignorant and childlike people to have asserted his sovereignty over the whole earth; and by the successful performance of a hundred Aswamedhas, it was implicitly believed that a mortal Raja would overthrow the celestial Raj of Indra, and become at once the ruler of the universe and the sovereign of the gods.

The Aswamedha a more important rite than the Rajasúya.

Idea involved in the Aswamedha.

The idea involved in this imposing ceremonial was at once primitive and warlike. An ambitious Raja who desired to establish his supremacy over friends and enemies without the formality of declaring war, and without perhaps the danger of encountering a formidable confederacy, would perform an Aswamedha in the following fashion. He would procure a horse of a particular colour, and let it run loose in public with certain ceremonies; and from that day, and for an entire year, the horse would be permitted to wander into whatever territory it pleased, followed by the Raja and his whole army. The wanderings of the horse were thus left entirely to chance, whilst its entrance into a foreign Raj was virtually a challenge to the Raja of that country; for every Raja was bound either to carry away the horse and offer battle, or else to tender his submission by restoring the horse and joining his army to that of the invaders. Moreover, if the Raja who attempted the Aswamedha and followed the horse, failed in any one case to secure the restoration of the animal by the force or terror of his arms, the Aswamedha was brought to an untimely close, and the Raja who had attempted it was disgraced in the eyes of his subjects and neighbours. If, on the contrary, he succeeded in reducing to submission every Raja who carried away the horse, and thus at the end of the year brought the horse triumphantly home to his own city, the animal would be sacrificed to the gods in the presence of the whole assembly of conquered Rajas; and the Aswamedha would be brought to a close by a grand feast, at which the roasted flesh of the horse would be regarded as the imperial dish. Henceforth the performer of the Aswamedha would be held in the highest honour.

Loosening of a horse, and wars against the Rajas whose territory he might enter.

Failure of an Aswamedha if the horse was not recovered.

Grand sacrifice and feast at the close of a successful Aswamedha.

Renown of every Raja who performed an Aswamedha.

The fame of his power and majesty would be spread abroad by bards and eulogists throughout all lands, and be handed down in song and ballad to all future generations; whilst every descendant for countless ages would preserve the memory and exult in the glory of his mighty ancestor.

Great attractions of the Aswamedha.

It is easy to conceive that under such circumstances the performance of an Aswamedha would be particularly fascinating to a warlike race like the ancient Kshatriyas. It would combine all the excitement of war with that of high play. If the horse entered the territory of too powerful a Raja, before the army which followed had been reinforced by the retainers of weaker Rajas who had been conquered, the Aswamedha might be brought to a disastrous termination. If, on the contrary, the horse confined himself to the territories of weaker Rajas, or deferred entering the territory of a stronger Raja until his followers had swelled into an overwhelming force, the Aswamedha might be brought to a triumphant conclusion. Probably in times still more remote the loosening of the horse may have been a mere festival held for the purpose of deciding the supremacy between the military settlers in a particular neighbourhood, and lasting perhaps only a few days or a lunar month, instead of an entire year.

Combination of war and gambling.

General excitement.

But whether on a large or a small scale, the greatest interest would be excited, and a general agitation would prevail. Every Chieftain in the neighbourhood would speculate as to whether the horse would enter his Raj, and whether in such a contingency he should hazard a battle or tender his submission. Every spot where the horse was caught, or where a battle ensued, would be eagerly remembered and

Memory of Aswamedhas preserved in local tradition.

pointed out to the inquisitive inquirer, and doubtless would be long preserved in local tradition.

Sacrifice of the horse at the close of an Aswamedha associated with the worship of the Sun.

The Aswamedha thus originally combined the idea of conquest and sovereignty with that of a national banquet at which the roasted horse might have been regarded as a national or imperial dish. But, at the same time, the sacrifice was undoubtedly invested with a religious significance, which is wanting in the Rajasúya. It was connected with the worship of the Sun, which, like the worship of the serpent, appears to have been one of the most ancient of all religions. The idea that the Sun god was carried through the firmament, from his rising to his setting, in a golden chariot drawn by fleet and invisible steeds, was a favourite conception of the Greek bards. Again, Herodotus states explicitly, that the Massagetæ of High Asia sacrificed horses to the Sun, under the idea that the swiftest of animals should be offered to the swiftest of deities.[1] In the two Aswamedha hymns in the Rig-Veda, the horse is regarded as the type of the Sun, and also of Agni, or the deity of fire.[2] At a later, but still ancient period, the Aswamedha appears to

Greek conception of the Sun god.

Horse sacrifice of the Massagetæ.

Disappearance of the Aswamedha in India.

[1] Herodotus, Book i. c. 216.

[2] See Rig-Veda, Suktas clxii. and clxiii., Wilson's *translation*, vol. ii. pp. 112—125. It must be confessed that the two hymns in question are exceedingly obscure. They are undoubtedly ancient, but still they appear to have been composed in an age of mysticism, long after the primitive age of horse sacrifice, and possibly during some temporary revival of the ancient rite. They are replete with mysticism, and are wholly wanting in that exultation in victory, and joyous anticipation of a feast, which are likely to have found expression in a more primitive and barbarous period, of which relics are to be found in the legendary narrative preserved in the Mahá Bhárata. Indeed, in the opening verse of the first of the Aswamedha hymns, the worshipper positively deprecates the wrath of certain Vedic deities for thus paying reverence to the horse:—"Let neither Mitra nor Varuna, Aryaman, Ayu (i. e. Vayu), Indra, Ribhukshin (? Prajápati), nor the Maruts censure us, when we proclaim in the sacrifice the virtues of the swift horse sprung from the gods."—Wilson's *translation*.

have fallen into disuse; and during the successive ages of Buddhism and Brahmanical revival, it must have been virtually abolished as altogether opposed to the enlightened ideas of more civilized times. But still the institution lived in oral tradition, and was so deeply rooted in the memories and minds of the Hindús, that it even yet finds expression in the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana, and is frequently referred to in the other sacred books of the Hindús. An interpretation, however, has been generally placed upon the ceremonial, which was wholly unknown in primitive times, and which will form the subject of future discussion. In the Mahá Bhárata the Aswamedha is said to have been performed as an atonement for sin; in the Rámáyana it is said to have been performed for the purpose of obtaining a son; whilst in both poems, and in the Puránas generally, the sacrifice is said to have been frequently effected by ancient Bráhman sages for the acquisition of religious merit, and for the attainment of a supernatural power which should render them superior even to the gods.[3]

Brahmanical interpretations of the ceremonial.

The description of the Aswamedha of Raja Yudhishthira, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, contains distinct references to the old primitive custom of loosening the horse, and fighting every Raja who opposed its progress, which has already been described. At the same time it is loaded with Brahmanical details and mythical references which are entirely at variance with this original idea. These

Brahmanical interpolations in the tradition of the Aswamedha of Yudhishthira.

Objections against eliminating the interpolations.

[3] In the Yajur-Veda, which is much later than the Rig-Veda, the sacrifice was performed without any slaughter, the animals being tied to the posts whilst the invocations were being chaunted, and then let loose without injury.—Colebrooke *on the Vedas*. A legend is preserved in the Mahá Bhárata of a similar bloodless Aswamedha having been performed by the sage Vrihaspati.

interpolations however are too closely interwoven with what appears to be the original and authentic tradition, to be altogether eliminated; and moreover are more suggestive and amusing than the ordinary run of Brahmanical additions. Accordingly the legend will be exhibited as it stands in the Mahá Bhárata, although in a greatly abridged form; the whole being divided into three distinct narratives, corresponding to the three stages in the performance of an Aswamedha, viz.—

Three stages in the performance of an Aswamedha.

1st, The capture of the horse.

2nd, The loosening of the horse.

3rd, The sacrifice of the horse.

The narrative of the capture, or, in other words, the stealing of the horse, may now be related as follows:—

1st, Narrative of the capture of the horse.

Melancholy of Yudhishthira.

Now after Yudhishthira had been established in the Raj, he again began to grieve very bitterly over the men who had been slain on his account in the great war; and the Mahárája and Krishna tried to arouse him from his sorrow, and Krishna counselled him to perform sacrifices, and to entertain many guests, by which means he might cast aside his melancholy. After this Krishna returned to Dwáraká, when the sage Vyása appeared to Yudhishthira, and advised him to perform an Aswamedha as an atonement for all his sins; and Vyása told him of a place where he might procure abundant treasure for the ceremony; for that in former times when a Raja of Ayodhyá had performed the same sacrifice, he had given so much treasure to the Bráhmans that they could not carry it all away, and accordingly stored a large quantity in a certain spot in the side of the Himálaya mountain, where it still remained. But Raja Yudhishthira refused for many days to send for the treasure, because it belonged to the Bráhmans; until at length the sage Vyása explained to him that fire, water, earth, and riches belonged to no one, and might be kept by any one who found them. So after

Krishna advises him to perform sacrifices.

Vyása counsels an Aswamedha for the atonement of his sins.

Yudhishthira's objections to taking a treasure belonging to the Bráhmans.

much discourse Raja Yudhishthira determined to perform the Aswamedha sacrifice, and to send for the treasure of the Bráhmans which had been stored in the Himálaya mountain.

Rule of the Aswamedha.

Now it was the rule at Aswamedhas that the horse which was to be sacrificed should be of a pure white colour like the moon, with a yellow tail and a black right ear; or the horse might be all of a black colour. The horse was to be let loose on the fourteenth day after the entrance of the sun into Aries, being the night of the full moon in the month of Choitro; and it was to run loose for a whole year, with a gold plate on its forehead; and on the gold plate was to be inscribed the name of the Raja to whom it belonged, and a proclamation that an army was following the horse, and that all who stopped the horse, or who led him away, would be compelled to accompany the army until the end of the year, and then would be called upon to attend the Aswamedha sacrifice. And Vyása, the sage, also told Yudhishthira that the sacrifice was a very difficult one, inasmuch as no Raja could perform it who had not obtained a perfect control over all his passions. Moreover, Vyása commanded the Raja that he must not sleep a single night out of his city throughout the entire year; and that he must always sleep on the ground, with his wife by his side, and a naked sword between them; and that he must never once put his hand upon her, or the whole merit of the sacrifice would be turned to guilt. Vyása also informed the Raja that a horse bearing all the requisite marks would be found at a very distant city named Badravati.

Colour of the horse.

Night of the loosening.

Gold plate with inscription.

Necessity for the Raja to control his passions for an entire year.

When Vyása had thus spoken, Bhíma offered to go to the city of Badravati and bring away the horse; and Yudhishthira gave him permission, but wished that Krishna had been present to counsel him in the matter. Whilst they were speaking together word was brought that Krishna was standing at the gate of the palace; saying, that he would not enter a house at the request of a doorkeeper, but only at the invitation of the owner. So Yudhishthira and his brethren went out and saluted Krishna, and brought him into the palace, and told him of the Aswamedha sacrifice

Bhíma offers to go to the city of Badravati to bring away a horse for the Aswamedha.

Krishna's sudden appearance at the gate of the palace at Hastinápur.

Krishna brought into the palace by Yudhishthira and his brethren.

that they were about to perform. Now when Krishna heard that Bhíma had been chosen to go to Badravati, rather than Arjuna, he was somewhat jealous, for Arjuna was his friend and near kinsman. And Krishna said:—"Why send Bhíma to bring away the horse? Surely such a mission is too great for him: I am aware that he understands everything connected with eating; but a man can have but a foolish head who is always thinking of his stomach: I know also that he has married a woman of the Asuras, and she will certainly deprive him of any sense he may have remaining: Moreover, it is the rule that if a man marries a woman of inferior rank, or gives himself up to the love of women, or lives in the house of his father-in-law, he may not take any part in the performance of an Aswamedha: Arjuna, on the other hand, is fitted in every way for high deeds." Bhíma replied:—"You say, O Krishna, that he who has a large stomach, and is ever intent upon eating, is without understanding; but who can have a wider stomach than yours in which the whole creation finds a place? You also say that a great eater has no brains; who eats more than you, who devour all the rivers, all the demons, and all mankind? Then you object that I have the daughter of an Asura living in my house, but you have married the daughter of Jámbavat who is a Bear; and is the daughter of a Bear to be preferred to the daughter of an Asura? As to my giving myself up to the love of women, is it not known unto all men that you are in no wise better than me? But let this pass: We are all anxious for your aid in the performance of this Aswamedha; and all my own hopes rest upon you alone."

Krishna jealous that Bhíma should be sent to fetch the horse instead of Arjuna.

Krishna's objections to Bhíma on the score of his fondness for eating, and his marriage to an Asura wife.

Bhíma retorts that Krishna's stomach contains the universe.

Refers to Krishna's marriage to the daughter of a Bear.

Mollifies Krishna.

At these words Krishna was mollified, and he gave his consent that Bhíma should go to Badravati. And Bhíma set out with two other warriors, and defeated the Raja of Badravati and brought away the horse. And the Raja resolved to accompany Bhíma to Hastinápur, and attend the Aswamedha of Yudhishthira, and to carry with him all his family and treasures. Now this Raja had a mother who was very old, and she was called his great mother, because she had been his father's head wife; and he was very anxious

Bhíma proceeds to Badravati to bring away the horse.

to take her with him. And the Raja said to her, that as she was now approaching the end of her days, it would be most proper for her to proceed to the river Ganges and bathe there, and to behold the many holy Rishis and devotees who had taken up their abode there. But his old mother replied:—"What is this Ganges water that you are talking about? Have I not a hundred better springs here? I will never quit this house; for if I stir, all the goods and chattels here will be eaten up: My maids and servants will be every day plundering milk, and grain, and butter, and causing me grievous damage; so that when I return I shall find half my property wasted and stolen." And the Raja's mother was very obstinate, and notwithstanding all that could be said, nothing would persuade her to leave the city of Badravati and proceed to Hastinápur. So the Minister advised the Raja to carry her by force, and accordingly a litter was prepared, and the old Rání was placed upon it, and she was carried away, crying very loudly, along with the whole camp to the city of Hastinápur. And when they came nigh unto the city, Bhíma went forward to inform his brother Yudhishthira, who thereupon came out to meet the Raja of Badravati, accompanied by Krishna and all his Chieftains; and Yudhishthira then conducted the Raja and all his party with great ceremony into Hastinápur.

Obstinate refusal of the old mother of the Raja to leave the Palace.

Old lady carried away by force.

Now according to the rule of the Aswamedha the horse could not be loosened until the night of the full moon in the month of Choitro.[4] And Krishna returned to his own city, and dwelt there; for there remained many months before the horse could be loosened and the preliminary rites be commenced. And when it only wanted one month to the ceremony, Raja Yudhishthira sent Bhíma to Dwáraká to invite Krishna to attend the sacrifice. And Bhíma set off for Dwáraká with all speed, and after some days he reached the city in the evening, and proceeded to the palace of

Krishna returns to Dwáraká until the night of the loosening of the horse.

Trick played by Krishna upon Bhíma.

[4] The month Choitro generally corresponds to the latter half of the month of March and the first half of the month of April. The full moon in the month of Choitro would thus often correspond to the full moon at Easter; and this coincidence has given rise to wild conjectures.

Krishna. And he was exceedingly hungry, and seeing that there was no doorkeeper at the gate, he passed on until he came to the door of the hall where Krishna was about to sit down to dinner. Now Krishna was aware that Bhíma had arrived, but feigned not to see him; and he sent a maid to fasten the door of the hall, and feigned not to see Bhíma, who could only peep in and see and smell the exquisite feast that was laid out for Krishna's dinner. And Bhíma was ravenous from his long journey, and he beheld the table most plentifully served with sixty-four choice dishes of meat, and an immense tray of rice, together with various vegetables; and Krishna, still feigning not to see him, began to name aloud every dish, and to smack his lips at its savour, until Bhíma was well nigh frantic and near to faint. And when this jest had lasted a long time, Krishna admitted Bhíma, and when Bhíma had eaten and drank until he was full, he told his errand to Krishna. So Krishna immediately ordered all his sons to make ready for their departure to Hastinápur, and prepared to set out with Rukminí and Satyabháma and his other favourite wives, and all his family; leaving his father Vasudeva and his brother Balaráma in charge of Dwáraká.

Feast spread out for Krishna's meal.

Tantalizing of Bhíma.

Krishna sets out for Hastinápur.

Now when Krishna set out from Dwáraká, his camp was composed of an infinite number of tradespeople and artisans of all descriptions, and women of the lowest character. There were gay women, flower-women, oil-women, and milk-women; also jugglers, serpent-charmers, monkey leaders, and all kinds of pedlars and showmen. There were also some Chieftains of high rank, for Vasudeva and Balaráma accompanied Krishna during the first three stages. And as they marched along there was very much laughter and merriment amongst the crowd, especially on account of the women. And a certain woman of infamous character was travelling on a bullock, and she was overturned by a camel; and the people laughed when they saw the woman falling upon the ground, for her character was known to all. But the woman arose and said:—"There is no occasion for laughing, for every day I behold the divine

Krishna's motley camp.

Merriment of the crowd.

Declaration of a gay woman, that by beholding Krishna her sins were forgiven her.

Krishna, and therefore all my sins are forgiven me." And Krishna heard her words, but he only smiled. After this a flower-girl came up to Krishna, and said:—"I have these flowers for sale, and it is already mid-day; I pray you therefore to order the camp to be pitched, that I may be able to sell my flowers before they are all withered and spoiled." Krishna replied:—"I will give orders that you be paid for every flower you have;" and the flower-girl heard his words and rejoiced exceedingly. Then another woman who sold milk came to Krishna, and said:—"All my milk is being spoilt by the journey, and the people here take no heed of the poor and needy."

Application of a flower-girl to Krishna.

Krishna's benevolent reply.

Application of a milk-woman to Krishna.

When Bhíma, who had been listening to these complaints, heard the grumbling of the milk-woman, he could contain himself no longer; and he said to Krishna:—"All the gay women and flower-girls, and milk-women in the camp come to you as if there were nobody else to take care of them, as there surely ought to be." Krishna replied:—"Your pity for these poor women is so praiseworthy that I herewith constitute you their Superintendent-General." Bhíma said:—"I have in my house the daughter of an Asura as my wife, and should she see me in the company of these women, she would be very jealous, and would devour them up. I pray you, therefore, to appoint some Superintendent who has a great number of women in his family." But Krishna, who had many thousands of wives, excused himself, saying:—"I have Jámbavatí in my family, who is the daughter of a Bear, and should she see such a number of handsome baggages about me, she would kill them all in like manner: But you Pándavas are five brothers with only one wife among you, and when she is with one of your brothers, these women will keep you from solitude." And all the people laughed at the words of Krishna. And Krishna sent the women to Bhíma accordingly, and they all sat round Bhíma and began to jest and laugh. And Bhíma said to them:—"Why do you come here to die; no one but Krishna can bear the trouble of so many women: All of you know that I have a wife who is the daughter of an Asura;

Bhíma complains to Krishna of the troublesome conduct of the women.

Krishna appoints Bhíma to be General Superintendent of the women.

Jesting conversation between Bhíma and Krishna.

Bhíma's address to the women.

and she is very jealous, and should she ever see you in my company she will devour you all up." At these words of Bhíma the women returned and informed Krishna, who laughed at their fears and then dismissed them.

Vasudeva and Balaráma return to Dwáraká accompanied by the multitude.

Now after three stages Vasudeva and Balaráma, the father and brother of Krishna, returned to Dwáraká accompanied by all the multitude; and Krishna, and his wives and children, proceeded with Bhíma towards the city of Hastinápur. On their way Krishna and his party approached the city of Mathurá; and when the people of Mathurá heard that Krishna was coming, they went out to meet him with presents of curds, milk, and flowers. And one who remembered him when he was a boy tending his cattle at Vrindávana, asked him where he had obtained such vast pomp and magnificence; and another answered him, saying:—"Krishna was once a keeper of cattle, and knew nothing of wealth beyond milk and butter; but now he is the mighty Raja of Dwáraká, and the sovereigns of the earth bow down before him." And some of the women also, who had known him in his childhood, asked him if he could remember the time when he had stolen their butter, and had been tied up for it by his mother Yasodá. But Krishna only laughed at these questions, and gave the women presents of fine cloths, and jewels, and money; so that they all went away in great joy.

Krishna and his party approach Mathurá.

People of Mathurá come out and meet Krishna with presents.

Both men and women remind him of his boyhood amongst the cattle at Vrindávana.

Krishna's presents to the women.

After this Krishna ordered the tents to be pitched on the bank of the river Jumná; and he sent for his sons and bade them to be mindful of their behaviour at the sacrifice, which was about to be celebrated; and he desired his wives to be sure to pay proper respect to Kuntí and Draupadí; and he specially commanded his eldest son Pradyumna to conduct himself with all humility at the ceremony, and to keep himself free from all high thoughts and pride, and to tell his mother, Rukminí, to wait with a great number of slave women upon Draupadí during the sacrifice. Krishna then went forward to the city of Hastinápur, leaving his camp to be brought up by Bhíma. And as he journeyed, a Bráhman said to the people:—"Ye think much of the merit of the sacrifice that is about to be performed; but the real

Krishna encamps on the bank of the Jumná.

Krishna proceeds in advance to Hastinápur.

A Bráhman proclaims the merit of beholding Krishna.

merit is to be derived from beholding Krishna." And when he came nigh to the city, multitudes of Bráhmans, with clasped hands, besought him to forgive their sins; but he said:—"If your hearts be true and single before God, there is hope of forgiveness from him." So he went on to the city while the women collected on the tops of the houses to behold him. As he advanced further, a eulogist said to him:—"What auspicious day is this in which men behold your face to the cleansing of all their sins:" And the eulogist also said to those around:—"This is Krishna, who has assumed so many transformations to visit the world." And Krishna took a necklace of pearls and jewels from off his own neck and gave it to the eulogist. After this Krishna was met by a large number of Bráhmans, who prayed to him; and then by a company of dancing girls, who sang and played before him. And Krishna stopped for a time to look at the dancing girls. And one of the girls said to those around:—"My heart is so intent with viewing Krishna, that I lose my recollection; and I fear that I shall spoil my dance, and that Krishna will think meanly of me." She then turned to Krishna, and said:—"You have one chakra which you whirl where you list, but I have four chakras which I can whirl." So saying she took one on each hand, and one on each foot, and whirled all four about to the admiration of Krishna and of all who beheld her. She then said:—"You play with the world as with a ball; and I can play with seven balls." So she took and tossed seven balls into the air, and caught each one in turn. And Krishna bestowed great praises upon the girl, and told her to come to his quarters, and he would give her whatever she asked of him.

The Bráhmans beseech Krishna to forgive their sins.

Krishna's reply.

Krishna praised by a eulogist.

Bráhmans pray to him.

Dancing girls perform before Kshna.

Pious speeches and wonderful performances of a dancing girl.

Krishna praises the dancing girl.

After this Krishna approached the city, and was met by Arjuna and all his kinsmen, and lastly at some distance by Raja Yudhishthira, and all the great men of Hastinápur, and they conducted him to the house which had been prepared for him. And Krishna paid a visit to Maháraja Dhritaráshtra and the Rání Gándárí, and the Rání Kuntí, and they received him with every honour. And Arjuna was despatch-

Krishna enters the city of Hastinápur.

Visits the Maháraja and Rání.

ed with many of the ladies of the Pándavas to meet the ladies of Krishna's camp; and when all the ladies had nearly reached the city, Yudhishthira and Krishna went out also to meet them; and in this manner the ladies of Krishna were conducted into the city and introduced to Kuntí, Gándhárí, and Draupadí. And Satyabháma said to Draupadí:—"We, who are so many thousands in number, have all but one and the same husband in Krishna, and we are all happy with him; how comes it then that you have five husbands, and are not ashamed before men?" Draupadí answered:—"You are every one jealous of each other, and are always talking of your suspicions one of another: But I never speak one word which all my five husbands may not hear alike, or which would give to either the smallest offence: And as to what you ask of my having no shame before men, I had great shame when Duhsásana insulted me in the presence of all the Kauravas; but Krishna miraculously protected me by his divine power; and as fast as Duhsásana stripped me of one of my cloths, Krishna supplied another in its room."

Ladies of the Pándavas receive the ladies of Krishna.

Conversation between Draupadi and the wives of Krishna on polygamy and polyandry.

Draupadí's acknowledgment of the miraculous interference of Krishna in the gambling pavilion.

Review of the foregoing narrative of the capture of the horse.

The foregoing narrative of the capture of the horse contains only a single relic of the original tradition; namely, the incident that the horse intended for the Aswamedha was literally stolen by Bhíma. Every other detail appears to be mythical; or, in other words, is a modern interpolation enforcing the observances of the Bráhmans, or the worship of Krishna. The conquest of the Rajas has been spiritualized into a conquest of the passions; and the conjugal rights of the younger Pándavas are apparently set aside, in order that Yudhishthira may sleep every night for an entire year by the side of his wife with a naked sword between them. Moreover, the main idea of the Aswamedha, that it was undertaken to settle questions of supremacy, has been virtually set aside in favour

Mythical character of the details.

Later Bráhmanical idea of conquest of the passions, atonement for sin, and acquisition of religious merit.

of the later Brahmanical notion that it was a sacrifice for the atonement of sin and the acquisition of religious merit. Again, the disqualifications mentioned by Krishna, as unfitting a man to assist at an Aswamedha; namely, marriage with an Asura wife, or with a wife of lower rank than himself, or residing in the house of a father-in-law;—are all breaches of Brahmanical law, which could scarcely have had any connection with the ancient celebration of an Aswamedha. Lastly, a palpable fable has been introduced of a treasure hidden in the Himálayas, which Yudhishthira declined to accept because it had belonged to the Bráhmans; all of which may be regarded as a later interpolation, intended to indicate by a negative process the respect to be paid by Hindú Rajas to the Brahmanical hierarchy.

Low marriage, etc., a disqualification for an Aswamedha.

Fable of the treasure.

Besides, however, these purely Brahmanical details, it will have been seen that the narrative of the capture of the horse is largely interpolated with incidents referring to Krishna, which are very curious and suggestive, and serve to illustrate that epicurean phase in the religion of the Hindús which will be discussed hereafter. Krishna appears not only as a lover of women, but as prone to mirth and jesting; and no doubt these were the characteristics of the mortal hero. But in elevating Krishna to the Godhead, and representing him as the incarnation of the Supreme Being, it seems to have been deemed necessary to invest him with divine attributes, such as the forgiveness of sins, and even to identify him with the universe in accordance with a pantheistic idea that the universe existed in him. The attempt to harmonize these two opposite conceptions of Krishna as a man and Krishna as a god, has re-

Large interpolations referring to Krishna.

Contradictory features in the nature of Krishna as a man of pleasure and as an incarnation of the Supreme being.

Absurd attempts to harmonize the two opposite conceptions.

sulted in a strange medley of absurdities; and these are especially manifest in the scenes between Krishna and Bhíma. Krishna reproaches Bhíma for his large stomach, his Asura wife, and his love of women. Bhíma retorts by an extravagant allusion to Krishna as the Supreme Being in whom the whole creation exists, not as an idea in the divine intellect, but in his stomach as an actual and material fact.[5] Bhíma also refers to the traditionary history of Krishna, in which it is recorded that the hero married the daughter of a Bear, and indulged in a multiplicity of amours. The scene in the dining hall, in which Krishna is descanting upon the excellence of the dishes whilst Bhíma is kept outside frantic with hunger, is still more whimsical, and precisely in accordance with Hindú tastes. It is utterly devoid of religious meaning, but yet it is a part of the conception of Krishna: and pious worshippers will laugh all the more because the jest was perpetrated by Krishna, just as courtiers will laugh at the sorriest jest uttered by their sovereign. But the scenes in Krishna's motley camp exhibit incongruities which would surpass the mysteries of the middle ages, or the practices at the Dionysian festivals. A courtesan excites merriment by falling

Krishna's practical jest with Bhíma in the dining hall.

Mixture of jesting and piety.

[5] It would be difficult to find a more curious illustration of the wide difference between the idealism of the learned class of Hindús and the intense realism which is alone apprehended by the masses, than is here involved in the remark of Bhíma as regards the universe. Many Pundits are perfectly capable of conceiving the creation as existing as a Divine idea in the mind of the Creator; and do indeed teach that all external nature, and the exploits of Krishna himself as a human being, are all Maya, or a delusion of the intellect. But the masses are totally incapable of apprehending such metaphysical conceptions. To them the mountains, rivers, and seas are absolute material facts, and nothing short of representing the universe as so much matter existing in the stomach of Krishna as the Creator of the universe, will render the cosmogony intelligible to the popular mind. As to Krishna's human character, that is to be dismissed as something incomprehensible, which the learned only can understand.

from her camel, and then proves her religious faith by declaring that her sins are forgiven her because she has beheld Krishna.[6] The benevolence of the deity is shown by his dubious liberality to a flower-girl; whilst his humanity is displayed in a still more dubious exchange of jests with Bhíma respecting the jealousy of their wives at the presence of the courtesans. The bantering remarks of the men and women of Mathurá, and those of the Bráhmans and dancing girls who welcomed the approach of Krishna to Hastinápur, are all of the same grotesque character; and instead of elevating a man into a deity, only tend to degrade the deity into a very ordinary mortal.

Bantering of the men and women at Mathurá.

There is one other incident in the narrative of the capture of the horse which is very curious; namely, the story of the old mother of the Raja of Badravati, who refused to leave her milk and butter to the mercy of the servants, or to believe in the efficacy of Ganges water; and who accordingly by the advice of the Minister was carried away by force. The language of the old lady is startling from its truthfulness to human nature. She is a perfect type of a large class. The power of the Ganges water to wash away her sins was a new-fangled doctrine which she utterly refused to believe. The springs in her own neighbourhood she declared were quite as good as the Ganges; in the same spirit that Naaman the Syrian declared that the rivers of Damascus were better than all the

Natural incident of the old lady who refused to leave her household goods to bathe in the Ganges.

[6] This observation of the courtesan is a striking instance of that doctrine of the power of faith in Ráma and Krishna as incarnations of deity, which is insisted upon by the worshippers of Vishnu; as opposed to the doctrine of the power of good works, such as austerities and sacrifices, which is insisted upon by the worshippers of Siva.

rivers of Israel. In a word, she seems to have cared more for her household goods than for the forgiveness of her sins; like Martha, she was cumbered with too much serving.

Narrative of the loosening of the horse.

The narrative of the second event in the performance of the Aswamedha, namely, the loosening of the horse, is quite as barren of real incidents as the narrative of the capture. The horse was loosened, and it was followed by Arjuna accompanied by a body of retainers; but there the authentic tradition ends. The real adventures of the horse during the subsequent wanderings, were probably restricted to the immediate neighbourhood of Hastinápur; but in the Mahá Bhárata the travels of the horse are extended not only to the most remote quarters of India, but beyond the Bengal frontier to the city of Munnipore, and beyond the Himálaya mountains as far as the northern ocean. The whole of these adventures may be treated as palpable fictions of a comparatively recent origin; but still they are well worthy of preservation, as they furnish striking illustrations of the current ideas which prevail amongst a people who are ignorant, credulous, and superstitious, but who are by no means wanting in the imaginative faculty.

Limited area of the real adventures extended by Bráhmanical exaggeration over all the known world.

Value of the fictions connected with the horse.

Twelve legends connected with the horse.

The so-called adventures of the horse are twelve in number, but literally they are twelve legends, or series of legends, connected with the countries into which the horse is said to have wandered. The identification of the countries in question is in many cases impossible, and if possible would be of little value, as will be clearly indicated hereafter. The heads of these twelve legends are as follows:—

1st, The Prince with a thousand wives, whose sister was married to Agni, the god of fire.

2nd, The disobedient wife who was transformed by her husband into a rock on account of her contumacy.

3rd, The Prince who was thrown by his father into a cauldron of hot oil, but preserved by prayer.

4th, The transformation of the horse into a mare and a lion.

5th, Adventures of Arjuna in a country of Amazons.

6th, Adventures in a country where men, women, and animals grew upon trees; where the people had blanket ears; and where human sacrifices were offered.

7th, Arjuna slain and beheaded by his own son in the city of Munnipore, but restored to life by the application of a jewel brought from the city of serpents in the under world.

8th, The Raja who offered to cut himself in half in order to deliver the son of a Bráhman who had been seized by a lion.

9th, The fortunate life of Raja Chandrahasna.

10th, The Rishi who had dwelt for many Brahmas in an island of the Ocean beyond the Himálayas.

11th, The son of Jayadratha and Duhsalá miraculously restored to life by Krishna.

12th, Triumphant return of Arjuna with the horse and the conquered Rajas to the city of Hastinápur.

The narrative of the loosening of the horse, and of the twelve adventures which followed, may now be related as follows:—

Night of the loosening on the full moon of the month Choitro.

Wanderings of the horse followed by Arjuna.

Twelve adventures of the horse.

First adventure of the horse.

Carried away by the son of the Raja by the counsel of one of his thousand wives.

Restored through the mediation of Agni, who had married the Raja's daughter.

Now when the night of the full moon in the month of Choitro had arrived, the horse chosen for the Aswamedha was solemnly loosened in the presence of all the people. And the horse went where it listed, and this it was to do for a whole year; and Arjuna followed the horse with an army; and a golden plate was fixed on the forehead of the horse, on which was inscribed the name of Raja Yudhishthira, and a proclamation that Arjuna was following the horse with an army, and that he would clear a passage for it, and compel any Raja, who opposed its progress or carried it away, to restore the horse, and to join his train, and attend the Aswamedha at the end of the year. And the horse went forward to many cities and countries, and had twelve adventures; and during those twelve adventures Arjuna did battle with many Rajas; and all those whom he fought against during these twelve adventures he conquered, and compelled them to give up their treasures for the performance of the Aswamedha, and to join his army for the protection of the horse; and many Rajas, hearing of the great victories that Arjuna had achieved, gave in their submission without a battle, and accompanied his train along with the conquered Rajas.

Now when the horse was loosened he went away towards the south; and his first adventure was in a certain Raj which was situated in the country of Malwa. And the son of the Raja had a thousand wives, all of whom were exceedingly beautiful, and exactly sixteen years of age; and the Prince took his pleasure with his wives in a charming garden in the neighbourhood of the city. And it so happened that one of his youthful wives saw the horse, and persuaded the Prince to carry it away into the city. And Arjuna demanded the release of the horse; and the Prince went out and fought against him, and was defeated. And his father the Raja went out also, and was defeated in like manner. But the daughter of the Raja was married to Agni, the god of fire; and Agni went out and fought against Arjuna with fire, whilst Arjuna shot arrows in return which produced water. And after a while Agni desisted from the battle, and coun-

selled the Raja to restore the horse, and the Raja did so, and accompanied Arjuna with all his army.[7]

Second adventure of the horse.

Legend of the disobedient wife, who was transformed into a rock.

After this the horse had a second adventure, for he rubbed himself against a rock that was enchanted, and thereupon stuck to the rock and could not be loosened. And this rock was a woman, who had been the wife of a Rishi; and she had been transformed because of her wickedness. Now when this woman was a girl, living in her father's house, her parents told her that when they gave her in marriage to a husband, she must obey him in everything; but she replied that she would not. And they heeded not her words, seeing that she was only a child; and after a while they gave her in marriage to a pious Rishi. Accordingly the Rishi took her to his own home, and as she was very young he performed all the household work himself; but when she was fully grown, he desired her to perform her proper duties, and especially to worship the fire, so that she might have fine children. But the woman refused to do aught; and she said that she wanted no children, and therefore would not worship the fire. Now one day the Rishi

Married to a Rishi, but refuses to fulfil her duties.

[7] The first adventure of the horse is utterly unmeaning, but the mythic narrative of the marriage of the Raja's daughter to the god Agni, the deity of fire, is strikingly illustrative of the later current of Hindú imagination, and may be told here in a few words. The daughter of the Raja desired to marry Agni because fire rendered all things pure; and if a woman burned herself upon the funeral pile after the death of her husband, she became perfectly pure. Moreover, Agni was the mouth of all the gods; and as all sacrifices to the gods must pass through fire, or Agni, so she, by having Agni for her husband, would ascend to the gods. And all the women laughed at her choice, but she went out into the jungle, and kindled a great fire, and propitiated Agni; and the god appeared before her in the guise of a Bráhman and promised to become her husband. So the disguised Bráhman went to her father the Raja, and made himself known, and demanded the Raja's daughter in marriage. But the Counsellors of the Raja laughed at the Bráhman as an impostor, upon which a flame issued from his mouth and burnt up the Minister's hair and beard. Then the Raja arose and paid reverence to Agni, and the flames ceased. Meantime, the news of the arrival of the Bráhman and his extraordinary errand reached the women's apartments, and the nurse of the Raja's daughter came out to see the Bráhman, and she took him into her own room and asked him if he were truly Agni. The Bráhman in reply gave a puff which set the house on fire, and began to burn the clothes of the nurse. So the nurse threw off all her clothes, and then rushed into the Council Hall crying and sobbing. At this sight the Raja again did reverence to the Bráhman, and the flame ceased, and Agni was duly married to the daughter of the Raja.

Plagues her husband.

desired his wife to bring him an earthen pitcher of water; and she threw down the pitcher, and broke it into pieces. And when it was night she rose from his side; and when he bade her return, she went out of the house. Thus she plagued her husband, until he grew lean and weak, and was like to die. At length a wise Rishi came to his house, and said to him:—"When you want your wife to do a thing, tell her not to do it; and then she will do all that you desire." With these words the wise Rishi went his way, but said that on the morrow he would return to the house. And when he had departed, the husband said to his wife:—"Our guest will return on the morrow, but do not make any preparations for him." And the wife replied:—"What is this you say? I would have you to know that our guest is so great a Rishi that he should be treated with all respect; and I shall not do as you desire, but will treat him very handsomely." And the husband thought within his heart that he had learned the way to rule his wife; so he said to her:—"To-morrow is the day on which it has hitherto been my custom to feast the Bráhmans, and offer cakes to the souls of my ancestors: But I have resolved not to do this; and if I do give a feast it shall consist of victuals of the worst kind, and I will only invite the most ill-favoured, ignorant, and worthless Bráhmans to the banquet." Then the wife replied:—This is a very pretty story that you are telling me: To-morrow I shall provide a feast that will rejoice the souls of your fathers for a whole year; and I shall invite only the most good-looking, learned, and respectable Bráhmans." And the husband said:—"If you do this, I will put on my meanest and dirtiest garments, and will not be present at the feast." And the wife replied:—"You will not do as you say; for I shall provide you with the best and cleanest raiment, and will myself conduct you to the banquet." So on the morrow the wife did all that she had promised, and her husband was filled with joy; but when the feast was over, he forgot the counsel of the wise Rishi, and commanded his wife to throw the remains of the victuals into the river Ganges according to the custom. But the woman in her pride and obstinacy,

The husband tells her not to do whatever he wishes her to do.

Success of the experiment.

Final wickedness of the woman.

carried out the victuals in his very sight, and threw them into a place where the hogs came and devoured them. Then the husband was exceedingly wroth, and in his rage he cursed his wife that she should become a rock; and he said:—"You shall continue to be a rock until Raja Yudhishthira celebrates an Aswamedha; and the sacrificial horse shall come to this place and run against you, and shall be fastened to you: But then when Arjuna strokes you and liberates the horse, you shall once more become a woman."

The Rishi curses her that she shall be a rock until Arjuna releases her.

Now when the horse had done as the Rishi had prophesied, Arjuna was greatly surprised; but the Bráhmáns who lived in that place came up and told him of all that had befallen the woman and her husband. So he stroked the rock and set the horse free; and at that same moment the woman was restored to her true shape, and returned to the house of her husband, and obeyed all his commands ever afterwards.

The horse fastened to the rock. Arjuna releases both the horse and the woman.

The third adventure of the horse was in the city of Chitaput, where all the people worshipped one God, and no man had more than one wife. And the horse entered the city, and was followed by Arjuna and all his army. And the Raja collected his army and prepared to march out against Arjuna, and he ordered that a large cauldron of boiling oil should be made ready, and that whoever should fail to march out with him should be thrown into the cauldron. And the youngest son of the Raja was named Sadnova; and when the Raja was about to go forth, Sadnova went to the inner apartments to take leave of his mother, and he kissed the ground before her, and said that he was going out to fight Arjuna. And his mother answered him:—"If you are killed in battle it will be well, but if you run away I shall be derided by all people." So Sadnova took his leave, and as he went out he met his sister, and his sister put a garland of flowers round his neck, and bade him be valiant and prove himself a man, for that her husband would upbraid her if her brother behaved like a coward. And when Sadnova left his sister, his young wife came up to him and said:—"I fear that you will be slain this day, and then you will marry another wife in Swarga; but if it be so I will burn myself with your dead

Third adventure of the horse.

Legend of the Raja and the cauldron of boiling oil.

Sadnova, son of the Raja, takes leave of his mother.

Takes leave of his sister.

Delays a little with his wife.

body, and so be united with you for ever." And Sadnova bade her fear not; but she replied:—"I know that you are endowed with courage, and that you will not return from the battle unless you come as conqueror." And she desired that he would embrace her before he went, and he did so. Meanwhile the Raja had gone forth, and when he heard that his son had delayed to join him, he was in great wrath. And he consulted the Bráhmans as to what he should do; and they said:—"Unless you keep your word your soul will go to Naraka." So the Rája ordered his son to be thrown into the cauldron, and Sadnova employed all his thoughts in praying to God, and when he was cast into the cauldron, the boiling oil ceased to bubble up, and became immediately cold. And all the people, who had blamed the Bráhmans for their counsel to the Raja, set up a loud shout of joy. And Sadnova arose out of the cauldron, and went out with the army to fight against Arjuna; but the victory was gained by Arjuna, and Sadnova and all his brethren were slain; and the Raja restored the horse and accompanied the army of Arjuna.

Thrown into the cauldron, but preserved by prayer.

Recovery of the horse by Arjuna.

Fourth adventure of the horse.

Changed into a mare, and a lion, and then restored.

After this the horse had a fourth adventure, for on his way he entered a pond and was changed into a mare, and then entering another pond he was changed into a lion; upon which Arjuna prayed to God, and the horse resumed its former shape.[8]

Fifth adventure of the horse.

Enters the country of the Amazons.

And it came to pass that after many days the horse had a fifth adventure, for he entered a country which was inhabited only by women, and their Rání was named Paramita. And the way in which these women became mothers was this. When men from other regions visited that country for traffic or from curiosity, the women lived with them as their wives; and if a daughter was born it was permitted to live, but a

[8] The story of the fourth adventure is purely mythical. The transformation of the horse into a mare is said to have been in consequence of a curse of the goddess Párvatí, who was assailed by a Daitya whilst bathing in that pond, and accordingly ordered that all males entering that water for the future should be turned into females. The second transformation was caused by a Bráhman, who was seized by a crocodile while bathing in the pond, and accordingly prayed that any creature entering that water for the future should be turned into a lion.

son was killed the moment it was born. And if a man stayed for more than a month in that country he was put to death; and such of his women as were with child remained alive, but such as were not with child burned themselves with his dead body; for which reason every man who could escape ran away after twenty or twenty-five days. When Arjuna arrived in this country, he said to the warriors about him:—"This is a marvellous country that the horse has led us to: If we conquer these women we shall obtain no credit thereby; but if we are conquered our disgrace will be greater than can be conceived: Moreover, these women are of great strength, and whoever lives with them for a month is a dead man: They will now seize our horse, and we shall find it hard to stand against them."

Marriage customs.

Arjuna's difficulty in fighting against women.

Whilst Arjuna and his warriors were engaged in this discourse, the women made their appearance; and they were all in the very prime of beauty. And they wore necklaces of the best-shaped pearls, and were attired in splendid dresses; and they were mounted upon horses, with quivers tied to their waists, and bows in their hands; and they were all perfect in the arts of love, and in the various ways of fascinating men. As soon as the horse caught their eyes, one of them ran and seized hold of it, and led it to the Rání, and told her who followed it and what was its destination; and the Rání ordered it to her stable to serve as a war horse. Then the Rání mounted an elephant, and all her female forces mounted their horses, and they all went out to meet Arjuna; and they were all of perfect beauty, and between fourteen and sixteen years of age, and the Rání Paramita was the very perfection of loveliness. And when these beautiful damsels saw that Arjuna and most of his warriors were mounted on chariots, they all laughed, and said:—"Are these men who are riding in their chariots come to vanquish us who are mounted on horses?" The Rání then advanced upon her elephant, and addressed herself to Arjuna, and said:—"You, O Arjuna, have triumphed over many men of note; see now if you be man enough to resist my attack." She then shot a single arrow with such exceeding grace that Arjuna and most of his

Extreme beauty of the Amazons.

They carry away the horse to their Rání Paramita.

Go out to meet Arjuna on elephants and horses.

Laugh at the chariots of Arjuna and his warriors.

warriors were abashed. And the Rání said to him:—"I myself will take you prisoner, and make you my slave; and you must give up this unprofitable Aswamedha sacrifice, and come and drink wine with me, and pass your time in great pleasure." Arjuna replied:—"I have heard that whosoever falls into your embraces certainly dies; and if I loiter here with you, who will take care of the horse?" Paramita said:—"Either way your death is nigh, for if you fight me you will fall by my arrows, and if you yield to me you will fall by the light of my eyes: But since you seem to have no desire for my love, I will slay you with an iron arrow." Then Paramita discharged some more arrows, and Arjuna found it impossible to withstand her; so he advanced and said:—"I am enamoured with your beauty and grace, and your skill and bravery; and I desire to lay aside all hostility against you, and to offer you my hand: But you are a woman of understanding, and you know that I am now engaged in an Aswamedha sacrifice, and that I cannot associate with a woman until the sacrifice is completed; but I promise that when I arrive at Hastinápur I will espouse you in the midst of my brethren and kinsmen, and will find suitable husbands for all the women who may come with you, for there we have men in plenty." When the Rání heard these words, she was extremely pleased, and said to Arjuna:—"It was my intention to make war against you, and to slay both you and all your people; but I will now make peace with you on condition that you accept me in marriage; and I will go to Hastinápur, and remain with Raja Yudhishthira until you return." So she sent for the horse, and restored it to Arjuna, and placed one of her own kinswomen in her room to govern the country; and then in great pomp and splendour, and accompanied with vast numbers of women, and goods and baggage beyond calculation, and all the finest jewels and curiosities that eye ever saw, she set out for the city of Hastinápur, whilst Arjuna again let the horse loose, and went after him.

Proposals of the Rání rejected by Arjuna.

Arjuna defeated, engages to marry the Rání.

Superabundance of men at Hastinápur.

Amazons restore the horse.

Paramita proceeds to Hastinápur.

Sixth adventure of the horse.

After this the horse encountered a sixth adventure in a country where the trees were very large and wonderful to

behold; for instead of fruit they bore men and women upon their branches, as well as elephants, horses, kine, goats, sheep, asses, and various other animals. But all these human and animal fruits were very short-lived; for when it was noon they were young and vigorous, but as the day drew towards a close they grew older and older, until at the setting of the sun they all died. Every day these fruits were produced, and grew to maturity at noon, and died at sunset. And the men of this country had ears like blankets, and with one of these ears they covered their heads and with the other they covered their bodies. And all the men and animals in this country had bodies that were crooked and distorted. Some of the men had the faces of horses, and others the faces of asses, and some had but one eye, or one leg, or one arm, whilst others had three eyes, or three legs, or three arms. And the Raja of this country had a Bráhman for his Minister. And this Bráhman wore a string of human heads over his shoulder instead of the sacred thread, and he carried human skulls in his hand; and he had the skull of an elephant hollowed out for a drinking cup; and for ear-rings he wore a dead elephant in one ear and a dead camel in the other; and for a walking-staff he had the bones of a dead cow. Now when this Bráhman saw the sacrificial horse, he went to the Raja and said to him:—"An enemy of yours has entered this country, whose name is Arjuna, and it was his brother Bhíma that slew your father, the Asura: Now therefore do you seize Arjuna, and all the people that are with him, and perform a Naramedha sacrifice, so that all of them may be burnt in the sacrificial fire: For this sacrifice has great merit, just as he who drinks wine and blood acquires great merit. And for this sacrifice of yours I will collect a number of Bráhmans who are drinkers of blood and wine, and who eat human flesh; as well as a number of Saniases who have performed penances for many years, the pagodas and sacred places, and who celebrate their rites by eating the flesh of maidens: And this was the sacrifice which was performed by Rávana, and by celebrating [illegible] you will become a second

Enters a country where men, women, and animals grow upon trees.

Men with blanket ears.

Monsters.

Terrible aspect of the Bráhman Minister of the Raja.

The Bráhman advises the Raja to seize Arjuna and his people, and perform a Naramedha sacrifice.

Merit of the sacrifice.

Bráhmans and Saniases who are cannibals and wine-drinkers.

The sacrifice performed by Rávana.

Rávana, and we will all pray for you." And the Raja replied:—"Your counsel is good!" So the Raja went out, with all the men and women of the country, to fight against Arjuna; and they employed many enchantments and magical arts. But after much fighting the Raja was slain by Arjuna, and all his forces fled in great confusion, and betook themselves to various quarters of the world and to the islands of the sea; and so that country was cleared of all these wicked Daityas. And Arjuna entered their abodes and found much gold and jewels beyond all calculation. So Arjuna distributed some among his soldiers, and some among the Rajas who accompanied him; and he loaded very much treasure upon camels and elephants, and sent them away to Raja Yudhishthira, and his other brethren, and his friends who were in Hastinápur. Arjuna then commanded that all the houses and families of the Daityas should be burnt; after which the horse was again loosened to wander where it would.

The Raja defeated by Arjuna, and his people escape to the islands of the sea.

Plunder of the city of the Daityas by Arjuna.

Arjuna burns all the houses and families of the Daityas.

Seventh adventure of the horse.

Enters the country of Manipura.

Mythical description of Raja Babhru-váhana.

So the horse went on for many days, until he entered the country of Manipura, and there he met with his seventh adventure. And the Raj of Manipura contained many well-peopled cities, and the Raja at that time was Babhru-váhana, the same whom Chitrángadá, the daughter of the previous Raja, had borne to Arjuna during his twelve years' exile. This Raja Babhru-váhana was without an equal in prowess and manhood. And in his Raj of Manipura there was not such a being as a liar, and the women were always obedient to their husbands; and there were also many wise and devout Rishis in the Raj, who studied the Vedas. And the whole country enjoyed tranquillity under the reign of Raja Babhru-váhana; and no one was ever anxious about worldly concerns, but all their thoughts were fixed on the world to come, and employed in the worship of God; and no one in that country was ever taken up and imprisoned; and if a poor man entered that territory, the Chandels made him a ryot that he might no longer feel any regret at leaving his own country.[9] The troops of that country were all of

[9] Chandel is the name of a numerous tribe of Rajpoots, originally from

determined bravery and great strength, and never turned their backs in the day of battle, however numerous might be the enemy opposed to them. And all the people in that country spoke the Sanskrit language, and they were always happy and in good humour, and all passed their time in mirth and joy.

Sanskrit spoken by the people.

Now the walls of the palace of Babhru-váhana were made of gold, and round the whole city were walls of silver; and warriors of renown kept constantly watch and ward. On the outside of the city were a number of waggons bound together with chains, and in them were placed fireworks and fire weapons, and men were always stationed there to keep guard. And many thousands of chariots and elephants and horses were employed in bringing the revenues of the Raj, in gold and silver, to a thousand treasuries; and the people who were employed to receive the money sat day and night; but so great was the treasure that the people who brought it had to wait ten or twelve years before their turn came to account for the money they had received, and to obtain their acquittal and return home. So perfect was the comfort enjoyed in that Raj, that strangers who arrived there were led to conceive that God had placed a second paradise in this world.

City and palace.

Waggons and fire weapons.

Exhaustless revenues.

And one of the Rajas that was following the horse said to Arjuna:—"There is no other country like this in the whole world: I have been accustomed to send every year to Raja Babhru-váhana, one thousand cart-loads of gold and silver, merely for leave to remain quietly in my own Raj; and if I failed to send it, an army came from him and laid waste the whole of my country: For the Raja is exceedingly brave, and also very learned and sage; so that he exceeds all the Bráhmans and Rishis in the world in wisdom, as well

Wealth and virtues of the Raja.

Mahoba in Bundelkund, but now scattered over the North-Western Provinces. They claim to belong to the Lunar race, who are said to have descended from Chrandra or the Moon; and they gave their name to the district of Chanderi or Chandeli. In the Lower Doab they are divided into four tribes, bearing the several Hindú designations of a Ruler or King, as Raja, Ráo, Rána, and Ráwat. The Brahmanical compilers of the Mahá Bhárata appear to have lived in the North-West Provinces, and assumed that Chandels formed part of the Munnipore population as landholders or zemindars.

as all the Rajas in the world in prowess: And if any one asks a favour of him, he bestows on him so much wealth that he never need ask any one else for more: The Raja is also of that continence and moral conduct that he never looks on a strange woman with an eye of desire, nor forgets for a single moment his worship and duty to God: This Raja has a Minister so able that no other Raja possesses his like; and this Minister manages the affairs of the Raj with such skill that the whole country is thoroughly well-peopled, and not a single measure of land is unoccupied or waste; and the Minister is likewise so brave that upon occasion he would hold combat with the great god Siva himself; and he never gives a word of bad counsel to the Raja."

Talents and bravery of the Minister.

Babhru-váhana seizes the horse.

Meanwhile the horse went forward until at night time he came near the city of Manipura; and it so happened that Raja Babhru-váhana had gone to the chase, but some of his people saw the horse and informed him of it; and he immediately ordered the horse to be carried into the city, and when it was night he commanded that it should be brought into his Council hall. Now the whole ground where the Raja held his Council was covered with gold; and at the entrance to the Council chamber were a hundred thousand pillars of gold, each forty or fifty cubits high; and the top of each pillar was made of fine gold and inlaid with jewels; and on the summits of the pillars, and on the walls, were many thousand artificial birds made so exact that all who saw them thought them to be alive; and there were precious stones that shone like lamps, so that there was no need of any other light in the assembly; and there also were placed the figures of fishes inlaid with rubies and cornelians, which appeared to be alive and in motion. All round the Council hall were sticks of sandal wound round with fine cloth, which had been steeped in sweet-scented oils; and these were burnt to give light to the place instead of lamps, so that the whole company were perfumed with the odour. And before each one of the principal persons in the assembly was placed a vessel ornamented with jewels containing various perfumes; and on every side and corner of the hall

Magnificent Council hall.

were beautiful damsels, who sprinkled rose water and other odoriferous liquors. And when the horse was brought into the assembly, all present were astonished at its beauty and excellence; and they saw round its neck a necklace of excellent jewels, and a golden plate hanging upon its forehead. Then Raja Babhru-váhana bade his Minister read the writing on the plate; and the Minister rose up and read aloud that Raja Yudhishthira had let loose the horse and appointed Arjuna to be its guardian. And when the Raja heard this, he said:—"Arjuna is my father! Say what course shall I pursue?" The Minister replied:—"O Raja, since Arjuna is your father it is extremely unfortunate that you should have seized upon this horse; for it would have been most proper for you to have followed this horse for one year by the side of your father."

Perfumes distributed by beautiful girls.

Horse taken into the Council hall.

The Raja discovers that Arjuna is his father.

Then the Raja, by the counsel of his Minister, determined to restore the horse, and to offer the whole of his possessions as a free gift to his father Arjuna. And he ordered all the troops to be in readiness in all their parade dresses, and he took with him all the Rishis and learned Bráhmans, and gave orders that all the men and women of this city should come forth. And all the most beautiful virgins of the best education and most skilled in music were called together; and some were mounted on elephants richly caparisoned, and some on the most splendid chariots, and some on litters of the richest make, whilst others walked on foot; and all were ornamented with necklaces of pearls and other jewels, and carried garlands of the sweetest flowers in their hands, which they were to throw round the neck of Arjuna. And there were other girls from ten to fourteen years of age, who were appointed to carry boxes of precious perfumes, and to pour them upon the head of Arjuna, and upon the heads of all the Rajas and Rishis, and sons of Rajas, and Chieftains, and Bráhmans that had followed the horse. Then Raja Babhru-váhana set out to meet his father Arjuna, with all his Chieftains and Ministers; and all the soldiers, horse and foot, and all the fire-workers, accompanied him; and all the tradesmen and artisans in the city carried with

Resolves on restoring the horse, and offering the Raj to Arjuna.

Splendid procession.

them their choicest goods and went likewise; and all the singing-girls and dancing-girls bedecked themselves and joined the cavalcade. In this order Raja Babhru-váhana advanced on an elephant, for elephants were very excellent in that country; and when he saw Arjuna he immediately alighted, and making the most profound obeisances, he slowly approached his father; and when he was come nigh he let loose the hair of his head, and he stooped forward and wiped the shoes of Arjuna with his hair. And the Bráhmans and beautiful maidens also advanced and poured on Arjuna's head all the jewels they had brought with them, so that the whole ground shone round about him like the heavens covered with stars. They also put chaplets of pearls and jewels, and wreaths of sweet-smelling flowers round the neck of Arjuna, and round the necks of the other Rajas and Chieftains who were with him, and poured vases of jewels and flowers over their heads.

Advance of the Bráhmans and maidens.

Then Raja Babhru-váhana advanced a second time before Arjuna, and made a profound obeisance, and said:—"You are my master and the author of my being; and though you be my father and I your son, I am now your slave: I now make to you a free gift of this Raj, and my armies, and my revenues, and my treasures, and all that I possess; and I am come to draw my sword in your service, in the hope that you will mercifully look on me with favour, and that as your other sons are severally employed under you, so you would also employ me." Saying this, Babhru-váhana again made a low obeisance; and then advancing, he laid his head under Arjuna's foot, and said:—"I hope you will raise my head from the dust with your own gracious hand, that I may lift up my head with honour among all the people of the world." And all the Rajas and Chieftains who had accompanied Arjuna presented themselves before him, and said:—"This is your own son; why do you not with your own hand raise up his head from the dust? No sovereign on earth ever had such a son; why do you not look upon him with an eye of favour and affection?"

Babhru-váhana offered his Raj to his father.

Places his head under Arjuna's foot.

But the Almighty had now brought an evil destiny upon

Arjuna, and it was predestined that he should be slain. And it came to pass that he was exceedingly wroth with the words of his great men; and he smote the head of Babhru-váhana so sharply with his foot, that his face was bruised against the ground. Then Babhru-váhana lifted up his head from the earth, and said:—"O my father, what fault have I committed that you thus strike me?" Arjuna replied:—"I struck you because you are not my son: If I had been your father you would never have been afraid; and I am assured that your mother, Chitrángadá, must have borne you to some herdsman: You ought not to have seized my horse, but having taken him, you ought not to have restored him without a battle: Had you possessed true valour you would have maintained a combat, as did my son Abhimanyu against many heroes in the great war: He was my son, and he was a lion; but you are a jackal, and have come and humbled yourself in the dust before one of your men have been killed, and before you have received a scratch: Your mother has danced and made a slip; and it becomes you to lay aside your bow and arrow, and to hang a tom-tom round your neck, and make a figure among dancing-girls; for no sign of the true Kshatriya appears in your countenance."

Arjuna strikes Babhru-váhana and discovers him.

Calls him the son of a herdsman and a jackal.

When Babhru-váhana heard these words of Arjuna, he smiled and said:—"O Arjuna, I have hitherto had great forbearance, but I now renounce you: In the fulfilment of filial duty I have presented myself before you, and this you attribute to my fear of you and your arrows; and you have vilified my mother, and called me the son of a herdsman; and your judgment has failed you, inasmuch as you have not known a Kshatriya from a herdsman." Having spoken these words, Babhru-váhana ordered all the virgins and other women who had come with him to return to the city, and he commanded that the horse should be led away, and the drums and trumpets sounded for battle. And then there was a desperate battle, and nearly all the Chieftains who had accompanied Arjuna were killed or taken prisoner. And Chitrángadá, the mother of Babhru-váhana, heard that

Babhru-váhana remonstrates and prepares for battle.

Defeat of Arjuna.

Entertainment of the prisoners by Chitrángadá.

many great Chieftains had been brought prisoners into the city, and that amongst them was Pradyumna, son of Krishna; and she sent surgeons to dress their wounds, and placed them in handsome apartments, and entertained them with provisions and sweetmeats. Meanwhile, Arjuna saw many evil omens, for a kite alighted on his head and began to scream; and he also saw that his own shadow was without a head. And he challenged Babhru-váhana to single combat, and they abused one another, and fought for a long time against each other; until at last Babhru-váhana discharged a crescent-shaped arrow at Arjuna, which severed his head from his body. And a light issued from the body of Arjuna, which resembled the sun in its brightness, and was seen by all the people of Hastinápur. And Yudhishthira and Bhíma were in great alarm at the light; but Krishna told them that he knew what it was, and that all would go right in the end.

Arjuna sees evil omens.

Beheaded by a crescent-shaped arrow.

Wonderful light issuing from his body.

Now when Raja Babhru-váhana had obtained this mighty victory, great rejoicings were made in his army. The musicians sounded the songs of triumph, and the eulogists praised the Raja and his warriors in loud harangues; and so much spoil was gathered together that the soldiers were troubled how to carry it away. And when the news reached the city of Manipura, all the beautiful virgins went forth with strings of jewels and flowers to meet the conquerors, and cast their wreaths upon the Raja; and all the houses were hung with different coloured flags, and all the Chieftains came to congratulate the Raja; and all the wives of the Chieftains went to the palace to compliment Chitrángadá upon the victory which her son had gained over such a matchless hero as Arjuna. But when Chitrángadá heard that her son had slain his father Arjuna, she fell into a swoon; and Uhípí, the other wife whom Arjuna had espoused during his twelve years, exile, and who had entered the service of Chitrángadá, fell down in a swoon likewise. And when they were somewhat recovered, Chitrángadá reproached her son very bitterly with the crime he had committed; and

Rejoicings of the Raja's army.

Musicians and eulogists.

Procession of maidens, with jewels and flowers.

Rejoicings in the city.

Horror of Chitrángadá on hearing that Babhru-váhana had slain his father.

prayed that a funeral pile might be prepared, and that she might be burned thereon.

Now it so happened that Ulúpí, who was the daughter of Vásuki, the Serpent Raja, remembered that the serpents possessed a jewel which would restore Arjuna to life; and she sent one of her kinsmen, who was residing at Manipura, to request her father Vásuki to deliver up the jewel. So the kinsman set off for the lower world, and arrived at the abode of Vásuki, and there he saw serpents all of gold, who were in the service of Vásuki. And the city of Vásuki was splendid beyond description, and contained ten thousand crores[10] of serpent inhabitants; and the wives of all those serpents were of consummate beauty. And the city contained more jewels than any person in the world has ever seen; and there was a lake there which contained the water of life, and in which all the serpents used to bathe. And the kinsman of Ulúpí entered the presence of Raja Vásuki, and proffered his request for the jewel. And at that time the great Serpent Sesha-nága, he who has a thousand heads, was on a visit to Vásuki; and Sesha-nága summoned all the serpents, and told them that he was desirous of sending the jewel to restore Arjuna to life, saying:—"If I send this jewel, and it restores Arjuna to life, my name will be exalted throughout the world; and I shall undoubtedly win the favour of Krishna, who is the great friend of Arjuna; and Krishna is now sovereign of nearly all the earth, and every living Raja pays homage to his superiority." The serpents then consulted together, but they were fearful that if the jewel were sent it would never be restored, so they refused to send it; and Sesha-nága desired the kinsman of Ulúpí to return to her, and acquaint her with what the serpents had said.

Ulúpí, daughter of the serpent Raja, sends to the under world for a life-restoring jewel.

Magnificent city of Serpents.

Beautiful wives of the Serpents.

Jewels.

Lake.

Sesha-nága advises sending the jewel to win the favour of Krishna.

Refusal of the serpents.

So the kinsman returned to Manipura, and acquainted Ulúpí and Raja Babhru-váhana with all that had occurred; and the Raja determined to lead his army into the nether world

Raja Babhru-váhana descends to the under-world, and defeats the Serpents.

[10] A crore is ten millions; consequently ten thousand crores are equal to a hundred thousand millions.

and make war against the serpents, and destroy their city. And Babhru-váhana did so, and descended to the lower regions, and fought many desperate battles against the serpents; and he shot arrows which produced peacocks in vast numbers; and the peacocks devoured the serpents until they were compelled to yield. So Sesha-nága called a council of all the chiefs of the serpents, and it was agreed that they should give up the jewel; and moreover that they should bring all their other jewels and rarities, and present them to Babhru-váhana that they might conciliate him thereby. Then Sesha-nága and all the chiefs of the serpents waited upon Babhru-váhana, and they gave up the jewel which was to restore Arjuna to life, and tendered their submission, and presented Babhru-váhana with all their treasures. And Babhru-váhana returned with the jewel in great honour and glory to the city of Manipura.

The Serpents tender their submission and give large presents.

The life-restoring jewel delivered up.

Meanwhile Krishna, and Bhíma, and Kuntí had mounted the back of the bird Garura, and ridden from the city of Hastinápur to the city of Manipura; and Sesha-nága came likewise from the nether world to behold Krishna and worship him. And Krishna prayed to God, and desired Sesha-nága to apply the jewel to the body of Arjuna; and the head was once again joined to the body, and Arjuna returned to life, and was healed of all his wounds. And Arjuna became reconciled to his son; and Raja Babhru-váhana prepared to accompany him; whilst Chitráṅgadá and Ulúpí set out for Hastinápur to be present at the Aswamedha.

Krishna, Bhíma, and Kuntí arrive at Manipura riding upon Garura.

Arjuna restored to life by the jewel.

Reconciliation.

After this, the horse entered the Raj of Ratnapura, and met with his eighth adventure; for the Raja seized him, and carried him away, but he was recovered by Arjuna.[11] Then

Eighth adventure of the horse in the city of Ratnapura.

[11] The eighth adventure of the horse is a long tissue of religious fables, of which one may serve as a specimen. When the horse was carried away, Krishna and Arjuna entered the city of Ratnapura disguised as Bráhmans. When it was night they found all the people asleep except a few young men who were sporting with their wives; and they listened at one of the doors, and heard a young man say to his wife:—"The more I gaze upon you the more I love you, just as people love Krishna the more they behold him." And they listened at other doors, and heard nothing but praises of Krishna. And when it was morn-

the horse encountered a ninth adventure in the country of Chandra-hasa, where he was seized by the Raja, but recovered in like manner.[12] The horse then went towards the northern mountain, and all the Rajas on the way tendered their submission, and gave up all their treasures, and joined Arjuna with all their army. And the horse passed the northern mountain, and reached the sea, and entered it; and Arjuna and Krishna were preparing to plunge into the sea likewise, and follow it, when they saw an island, and an old Rishi sitting there. And the old Rishi had sat in one place so many years that a tree had grown up between his legs, and birds had built their nests upon the tree, and serpents had made their holes all round him. And the Rishi said that he had remained there during twenty Bráhmas, and had frequently seen the world come to a close and begin again.[13] And the Rishi saw Arjuna and Krishna, and bade them complete the Aswamedha, and at his words the horse came out of the sea. And the Rishi prayed to Krishna that he might be present at the Aswamedha; and Arjuna and Krishna carried him away with them.

Ninth adventure of the horse in the Raj of Chandrahasa.

Tenth adventure of the horse in the sea beyond the northern mountain.

Story of the old Rishi who had lived during many Brahmas on an island in the sea.

The Rishi proceeds to attend the Aswamedha.

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ing they entered the Council Hall, and the Raja, supposing that they were Bráhmans, treated them with every respect. Krishna then complained that a lion had carried away his son, but had promised to release him on receiving the half of the body of the son of the Raja of Ratnapura, saying that a Kshatriya could not refuse even to sacrifice his own life if requested by a Bráhman. In reply, the Raja agreed to sacrifice himself in the place of his son; and directed his wife and son to saw him in two. Just, however, as the saw was adjusted, a tear fell from the left eye, and Krishna declined to accept an offering which appeared to be involuntary. The Raja, however, explained that the tear fell because the Bráhman did not deem his left side worthy of acceptance, but only his right side. Krishna was so pleased at this explanation that he made himself known, and stopped all further proceedings; and the horse was liberated, and the Raja's son followed Arjuna with a large army.

[12] The traditionary life of Chandra-hasa is very curious, and will be found related in Part III., containing episodes from the Mahá Bhárata. It is a story in which the good fortune of Chandra-hasa is contrasted with the evil fortune of a certain Minister who was ever plotting to destroy him.

[13] A Brahma is a period of vast duration, and may be described as an abortive effort to calculate eternity. A day of Brahma comprises the period of a universe, during which the world is created by a Brahma, preserved by Vishnu, and destroyed by Siva; after which the same process is continued *ad infinitum*. A single day of Brahma is equivalent to rather more than four thousand millions of mortal years.

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART II.

Eleventh adventure of the horse in the city of Jayadratha.

After this, the horse passed along the mountain Sumaru, and proceeded in a northerly direction until he arrived at the city of Jayadratha, where he encountered his eleventh adventure. Now the Raja of this city was the son of that Jayadratha, who had carried away Draupadí in the jungle, and had afterwards been slain by Arjuna in the great war.

Story of Duhsalá.

And the mother of the Raja was named Duhsalá, and she was the sister of Duryodhana, and the daughter of Maháraja Dhritaráshtra. And when the Raja heard that the horse had entered his city, and that it was accompanied by the man who had slain his father, he fell down from his throne with a deep sigh, and gave up the ghost. And when his mother Duhsalá saw that her son was dead, she uncovered her head, and ran out of the palace until she came to Arjuna; and she said to him:—"O Arjuna, you slew my husband, and now my son has expired at the mention of your name: I am your sister, and have no one to look to but you; I therefore pray you to take me under your protection." And Arjuna dismounted from his chariot, and acknowledged her to be his kinswoman; and he wept very much, and said to her:—"You are dearer to me than all my sisters: I had no quarrel with your husband Jayadratha, but he carried away our wife in the jungle; and after that we had forgiven him that offence, he caused the death of my beloved son Abhimanyu in the great war, so that I was compelled to combat him: And now that I have had only the kindest intentions toward your son, I cannot conceive what should have caused his death." Duhsalá replied:—"I do not ask you for the blood of my husband, nor for the blood of my son: but now that you are in the course of performing the Aswamedha sacrifice for the security of your Raj, and for the religious merits attached to the sacrifice, I beg that you will not leave me here oppressed with misery." And Arjuna compassionated her, and said:—"O my sister, whatsoever I can possibly do for you, I will." And

The dead son of Duhsalá and Jayadratha miraculously restored to life by Krishna.

Krishna and Arjuna, and the daughter of Dhritaráshtra then went to the dead body of the son of Jayadratha; and Krishna laid hold of the dead man's hand, and said:—"Arise!" And by the will of the Almighty the dead man

immediately arose; and when he beheld those around him, his mother said to him:—"O my son, this new life has been given to you by reason of Krishna; pay respectful obeisance to him." So her son threw himself at the feet of Krishna; and in one moment that city was turned from mourning into great joy, and the drums of rejoicing were beaten aloud, and all the inhabitants were glad and made merry from house to house at all the doors; and the Raja and his mother Duhsalá accompanied Arjuna in great happiness to the city of Hastinápur.[14]

Krishna returns to Hastinápur.

Seeing now that all danger as regards the horse was entirely over, Krishna returned with all speed to the city of Hastinápur to acquaint Raja Yudhishthira with all that had taken place; whilst Arjuna, and all the Rajas and Chieftains in his train, followed Krishna very slowly with all pomp and magnificence, carrying with them all the treasures which had been collected during the loosening of the horse. And when Krishna arrived at Hastinápur he found Raja Yudhishthira sitting on the bank of the Ganges, dressed in the skin of a deer and holding a deer's horn in his hand; and all his Chieftains, and Draupadí and Kuntí and all the ladies, were seated with him. Krishna then made obeisance to Raja Yudhishthira, and to all the others; and he said to Yudhishthira:—"O Raja, by your favour Arjuna has conquered all the Rajas in his way, and is approaching with a mighty company, and with more treasure than can possibly be expended in this Aswamedha sacrifice." And Krishna related at length to the whole assembly the adventures of the horse, and the victories which had been achieved by Arjuna.

Finds Yudhishthira sitting by the Ganges in a deer's skin, and holding a deer's horn.

Relates the victories of Arjuna.

After this, Subhadrá, the sister of Krishna, came out to meet her brother, and he had been absent from her so long that when she saw him she burst into tears; and Krishna embraced her and comforted her. Krishna then took leave of the assembly, and taking Bhíma by the hand he proceeded to his own dwelling. And Krishna's wives were greatly rejoiced at his arrival, and Satyabhámа said to him:—"Have you taken

Consoles his sister Subhadrá.

Questioned by his wives.

[14] The twelfth adventure of the horse is nothing more than the triumphant return of Arjuna to Hastinápur.

no new spouse during this expedition? Arjuna has sent hither the Rání Paramita, and perchance you have acquired a fresh wife likewise." And Krishna smiled, and said to Bhíma:—"Do you hear what these ladies insinuate of us?" And Krishna and Bhíma then sat down for a short while, and partook of some food. And Yudhishthira sent a message beseeching Krishna to come to him and counsel him respecting the coming Aswamedha and the reception to be given to Arjuna. And Krishna went to the Raja, and after some discourse it was agreed that Yudhishthira should remain in the city and occupy himself with the affairs of the Aswamedha; and that Krishna, accompanied by Maháraja Dhritaráshtra, and Vidura, and Bhíma, and all the Chieftains, and all the ladies who had assembled at Hastinápur, should go forth to meet Arjuna and all his train.

Advises Yudhishthira respecting the Aswamedha.

Twelfth adventure of the horse.

Triumphant return of Arjuna to Hastinápur.

Then Raja Yudhishthira ordered the city to be decorated for rejoicings, and suitable lodgings to be prepared for all the Rajas who accompanied Arjuna; whilst Krishna and all the others went out of the city upon thrones and litters, and accompanied by an innumerable crowd of men and women. And when the people of Hastinápur, who had gone out of the city to welcome Arjuna, beheld him approaching with his mighty train, they welcomed him in a transport of joy, and Arjuna saluted all his kinsmen and brethren with great respect and affection. And Arjuna introduced his own son Babhru-váhana; and all the Rajas and Chieftains who were with him, one by one, to Maháraja Dhritaráshtra; and they all saluted the Maháraja, and Vidura, and Bhíma, and all the other Chieftains who had come out from Hastinápur to meet them. And Krishna said to Arjuna:—"Now that you are about to enter the city, you should form your troops in the most splendid array, that the people may all see what a fine army and train you have under your command." So Arjuna arrayed all his forces in the best order, each rank by itself, so that every man might keep his proper place; and no one in that quarter had ever before seen so fine an army in such an imposing array. And all the men and women of Hastinápur had come out of the city in

Marshalling of the army.

Rejoicings of people.

their gayest attire; and all the artists and tradesmen carried specimens of their best productions and commodities with them. And in this manner Arjuna entered the city in all pomp and grandeur; and all the Rajas who were with him also put their forces in the best order, and all the troops were covered with gold and jewels; but Babhru-váhana, son of Arjuna, outshone all the others. And as they entered the city, chains and wreaths of flowers were let down upon their heads from the verandas, and large presents of money were scattered in handfulls, so that the poor and needy in the city became all rich from the quantity they picked up.

Garlands thrown from the verandahs.

In this splendid procession Arjuna moved on until he entered the presence of Raja Yudhishthira, and then he went and laid his head at the Raja's feet. And Yudhishthira wept for fulness of joy, and lifting up Arjuna's head he placed his face to that of his brother, and took him for a long time in his arms, and kissed his head and face. Arjuna then conducted his son Babhru-váhana by the hand, and introduced him to Yudhishthira, and said:—"O Raja, this is my son: Give him, I pray you, a reception so gracious as to encourage and comfort him." The Raja then embraced Babhru-váhana and kissed his face; and Babhru-váhana, knowing that he had fought against his own father, was abashed in the presence of the Raja and his other kinsmen; but Yudhishthira received him so kindly, that all his shame passed away. After this Arjuna introduced all the other Rajas who had come with him, one by one; and Raja Yudhishthira gave them all so distinguished a reception, that they repented not having come from the beginning to pay their respects to the Raja, and spend their entire lives in his service.

Interview between Arjuna and his elder brother Yudhishthira.

Introduction of Babhru-váhana.

Joy of the Rajas at their reception by Yudhishthira.

The foregoing narrative of the loosening of the horse, and its subsequent adventures in strange countries, does not appear to call for much remark. The story of the young Prince who had a thousand girl wives, all exactly sixteen years of age, and all sporting together with their husband in a beautiful

Review of the twelve adventures of the horse.

Oriental idea of happiness.

garden, is a curious exaggeration of the Oriental idea of happiness, in which women are regarded as objects of desire rather than as objects of affection.

Moral lesson involved in the fable of the disobedient wife.

The story of the woman who was transformed into a rock for disobedience to her husband is of course intended as a lesson and a warning; and certainly the enormities committed by the refractory lady were the acme of wickedness, according to the ideas of the Brahmanical period. She had declared that she would never obey her husband; she had refused to perform the household duties; she had expressed a desire to be without children; she had broken a pitcher of water that her husband had called for; and above all, she had left him in the night time and gone out of the house. These crimes were bad enough, and indeed reduced her husband to a skeleton, but that there was yet one further sin which she committed which was unpardonable. A wise old Rishi had counselled her husband to command her not to do whatever he desired to have done; and for a brief interval her contumacious proceedings appeared like a brilliant fulfilment of duty. She feasted the Bráhmans; she prepared the necessary cakes and viands for the souls of her husband's ancestors; and she provided new and clean clothes for her husband to wear at the entertainment. But in one unhappy moment her husband forgot his cue.

Hindú conception of a bad wife.

Crowning sin of giving the remains of consecrated victuals to the hogs.

In the joy of his heart he desired her to throw the remains of the consecrated victuals into the Ganges, according to the law; upon which she threw them, out of sheer contradiction, into a place where they were devoured by hogs. Her husband being a Bráhman, could not endure so grievous an offence; and accordingly cursed her into becoming a rock

until Arjuna should come and restore her to her proper form.[15]

Custom of Hindú warriors taking leave of female relatives before going to battle.

The story of the young Prince who was thrown into a cauldron of hot oil without being injured, is of course interesting to the Hindú from the miracle which it involves, but is chiefly valuable on account of the light which it throws upon the later Hindú custom of a warrior taking leave of his female relatives before going out to battle. The hero of the legend first takes leave of his mother, who entreats him to perish on the field rather than run away, lest she should be held in derision by the people. He next bids adieu to his sister, who throws a garland round his neck, and then makes the same request, on the ground that otherwise she would be upbraided by her husband. Lastly, he takes a farewell of his young wife, who expresses her conviction that he will be slain, but avows her determination of burning herself with his dead body, and thus rejoining him in the heaven of Indra.

A mother.

A sister.

Resemblance between the Hindú and Greek traditions of the Amazons.

The story of Arjuna's adventures in the country of women bears a close resemblance to the Greek traditions of the Amazons, who are generally referred to the neighbourhood of the Caucasus. The Amazons were supposed by the Greeks to have formed a military community, amongst whom the marriage tie was but lightly regarded, although no virgin was allowed to wed until she had slain her enemy.[16] The Hindú tradition seems to have sprung from similar circum-

Identification of their country with Malabar.

[15] The prophecy involved in this curse is strictly in accordance with Hindú ideas. Thus Gotama cursed his wife into being a stone until Râma should come and release her. See Part IV., containing the Râmâyana, which will be comprised in Volume II. of the present history.

[16] Herodotus, Book I. c. 203; IV. 110-117. The ancient and modern traditions of the Amazons in the neighbourhood of the Caucasus have been collected by Klaproth. See *Travels in the Caucasus and Georgia*, chap. xxx.

stances, which still prevail in the country of Malabar along the southern quarter of the western coast of the Indian peninsula. The Nairs of Malabar are a military class, and amongst them the marriage tie is merely nominal. Indeed, the women may be said to be masters, for they claim and exercise the right of receiving as many lovers as they please, provided they belong to the Brâhman or Nair caste.[17]

Privileges of the Nair women.

The story of the country of the Daityas, where men, women, and animals grew upon trees, is a fan-

Curious allusion to human sacrifices and cannibal orgies.

[17] The peculiar customs prevailing amongst the women of Malabar have attracted the attention of travellers from the very earliest period. The travels of Van Linschoten in the sixteenth century, of Fryer in the seventeenth century, and of Buchanan at the commencement of the present century, contain some curious details, which are generally confirmed by the present residents on the western coast. (See especially Dr Day's *Land of the Permauls*, 1863.) It appears that there are two principal castes in Malabar, namely, the Brâhmans, or priests, and the Nairs, or military class. The Nairs are nominally married to girls of their own class, when the latter are ten or under ten years of age, but they never have any intercourse with their wives, who continue to live with their mothers or brothers; and when the mother dies, the eldest sister becomes the head of the household. Meantime, the Nair women receive as many lovers as they please, provided they belong to the Brâhman or Nair caste; and the young men vie with each other in rendering themselves agreeable to the women. When a lover receives admission into a house, he commonly gives his mistress some ornaments and a piece of cloth; but, according to Buchanan, these presents are never of such value as to give room for supposing that the women bestow their favours from mercenary motives. When the lady returns the cloth, it is a sign that the gentleman must cease his visits; but it must not be concluded that she has only one lover at a time, for more than one are frequently admitted to a share in her favours.

The result of this strange absence of matrimonial restraint is that no man knows his own children, and the succession accordingly goes from the father to the sister's son; and this rule still prevails in the succession to the Raj, both in Travancore and Cochin, as well as to all property generally. It has been inferred that the custom originated in an ancient privilege exercised by the Brâhmans of visiting the females; that when this sacred body had established their hierarchy in the country, they probably wanted soldiers and mistresses, and therefore instituted the Nair caste, the males acting in the first capacity, and the females in the second. It seems, however, more reasonable to suppose that it was an original institution; and that when the Brâhmans had settled in the country they secured for themselves a share, or more than a share, of the favours granted by the Nair women. Buchanan says that the Nair women are proud of reckoning among their favoured lovers many Brâhmans, Rajas, or other persons of high birth.

ciful and contradictory fable, which is only of importance from its allusions to human sacrifices, and especially from its allusions to the cannibal orgies of certain Saniases. This branch of the subject will be further noticed in treating of the religion of the Hindús. It is, however, worthy of remark that the Daityas are said to have fled to the islands of the sea; a circumstance which seems to identify them in the present case with the Buddhists; to whom the Brahmanical compilers would have been led by the virulence of religious hate to attribute any vile custom.

Possible identification of the Daityas with the Buddhists.

The legend of Arjuna's adventures in Munnipore is perhaps the most interesting of any, from the light which it throws upon the Brahmanizing of the national epic by the later compilers, to which allusion has so frequently been made. Munnipore is a barbarous country between Bengal and Burmah. The people are at present in a transition state. They are Nágas, or worshippers of serpents, under process of conversion to Hindúism; a process which is going on to a very large extent amongst the aboriginal races generally throughout India. No traces, however, of this process can be discovered before the beginning of the last century, when it appears to have been commenced by a Mahunt of Sylhet. Indeed, many of the present generation of Munniporees can remember when it was usual in most families for half the members to profess Hindúism, and be called "clean;" whilst the other half followed their old Nága customs, and were called "unclean." That Hindúism is of late origin in Munnipore is also proved by the evidence of language. The connection between Bráhmanism and the Sanskrit language appears to have

Brahmanizing of the national epics illustrated by Arjuna's mythical adventures in Munnipore.

Modern conversion of the Munniporees from serpent-worship to Hindúism.

Late origin of the conversion proved by the evidence of language.

been always very intimate; and the languages of the Bráhmanized populations of India seem to have been more or less derived from the Sanskrit, or, at any rate, to have borrowed Sanskrit words and forms. But neither the language of Munnipore, nor that of the races eastward of the Munnipore valley, appear to have any connection whatever, with that of Sanskrit.

Brahmanical description of Munnipore.

The descriptions, however, of the Raj and Raja of Munnipore, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, are exaggerations of the Bráhmanical idea of perfection.

The Raja.

The Raja was unequalled for valour, very wise, and

The Minister.

a model of chastity. The Minister administered affairs so skilfully that the country was well peopled, and not a measure of land was uncultivated. Moreover, he was very brave, and never gave bad counsel

The people.

to the Raja. The people of the Raj always told the truth; the women obeyed their husbands; the Bráhmans were wise and devout, and studied the Vedas; the soldiers were strong and brave; and the San-

Palace and city.

skrit language was spoken throughout the Raj. The golden walls of the palace, the silver walls of the city, and the exhaustless treasures of the Raja, are mere

Reference to artillery.

creations of the imagination; but the reference to fire-works, and especially to fire weapons placed in waggons, which were bound together by chains, seems to indicate the use of artillery, and this reference is of some importance, as the original myth appears to have originated at a period not later than the eleventh century."[18]

Poetical imagination manifested in the descriptions.

The scenes which are described in connection with the carrying away of the horse, the meeting

[18] See foot-note further on.

between the Raja and his father Arjuna, and the descent to the city of Serpents, indicate a poetical imagination of a high order. The picture of the Council hall is a marvellous work of painting; and it is presented, not in the glare of sunlight, but in the darkness of the night illuminated by a countless number of sandal-wood torches. The pillars, the walls, and the pavement are of pure gold, radiant with figures of birds and fishes composed of many-coloured gems. The Raja is seated on his throne, surrounded by his Chieftains, and before each one is placed a jewelled vase of perfumes. Presently the mysterious horse is led into the hall before the whole assembly, with a golden plate upon his forehead, and a string of pearls hanging round his mane. The Minister reads the inscription on the golden plate, challenging the Raja to battle. The Raja suddenly discovers that his own father is the guardian of the horse; and that he must not only restore the horse, but tender the most abject submission to his newly-found father.

Wonderful description of the Council hall.

Entrance of the horse.

Surprise of the Raja.

The scene now changes. A procession is formed in accordance with Hindú ideas of pomp and grandeur. There is the Raja surrounded by his Ministers and Chieftains, all arrayed in gorgeous attire. There are the soldiers in their parade dresses; the Bráhmans, holy, devout, and learned; the beautiful and accomplished maidens, some in splendid chariots, some mounted on richly-caparisoned elephants, whilst others are walking on foot or proceeding in gay palanquins. There too are the girls with their boxes of perfumes; the tradesmen and artisans with samples of their wares; and the frail but attractive bands of singing and dancing women. Then follows

The grand procession of the Raja and his Ministers, accompanied by soldiers, Bráhmans, maidens, and dancing-girls.

Extraordinary meeting between the Raja and Arjuna.

the meeting between the son and the father. The Raja manifests his filial respect by wiping the shoes of Arjuna with his long hair; upon which Arjuna strikes him to the earth, and accuses him of being a coward and the son of a herdsman. Next follows the mythical battle in which Arjuna is slain; and the palace rings with the screams of his wife Chitrángadá, who calls for a funeral pile that she may be burned with the body of her slaughtered husband. Lastly, the descent into the subterranean regions, and conquest of the city of Serpents, create a sensational thrill in a Hindú audience, which few who have not resided in India will be able to apprehend. Ages of Brahmanism have failed to crush out the old primitive worship of the serpent, as the mysterious deity of the regions below. To many he is the guardian deity of the household, to be propitiated with mantras and offerings of food; and, according to the popular belief, it is the great Raja of Serpents, the mighty Sesha-nága, who supports the universe upon his head. But still the Hindú imagination calls up exaggerated visions of the terrible serpent-gods, whose irresistible coils and venomed fangs are deadly to all save the all-powerful charmer; whose gleaming coats are radiant with a thousand dyes, and whose wrathful hoods are sparkling with countless gems; whose city in the under world is as brilliant as a mine of jewels, and who dwell there in endless numbers, with wives of unearthly beauty, and children as fascinating and as terrible as themselves.

Death of Arjuna.

Sensational descent into the city of Serpents.

Hindú worship of the Serpent as a guardian deity.

Exaggerated ideas of a city of cobras.

The religious ideas connected with the old worship of serpents may be reserved for discussion hereafter; but still it may be remarked how admirably the present myth is adapted to wean a barbarous people

from so low a form of worship, and to lead them to adopt the gods of the Bráhmans. Not a single idea is expressed which could wound the prejudice of the serpent worshipper. The power of the Serpents is duly acknowledged, and their city is described with a marvellous power of fancy. But the Serpent Raja himself acknowledges the superiority of Krishna; and the city of the Serpents is conquered by the son of Arjuna. The result has been that notwithstanding the late advent of Bráhmanism, the myth of the sacrificial horse has taken a powerful hold upon the minds of the rude and half-savage Munniporees. The spot where the horse is said to have entered the Munnipore valley is still pointed out, and goes by the name of Sagon-mang, or "horse-lost;" the spot where he was caught is still called Sagon-pul, or "horse-stopped;" and the part of the palace enclosure into which he is said to have been led is still called Sagon-keephum, or "horse-tying place." The cavity down which the descent was made in search of the jewel is still to be seen; and there in that cavity is said to reside the Serpent ancestor of the Rajas of Munnipore, and over it is still placed the throne of the reigning Raja.[19]

Adaptation of the mythic details to the Munniporees.

Locale of the adventures of the horse still pointed out by the Munniporees.

The later adventures of the horse are of very minor importance. They are mere extravagances

Later adventures of the horse connected with Krishna.

[19] For many particulars in the foregoing observations, I am indebted to Colonel MacCulloch, the present Political Agent at Munnipore. It is somewhat curious that the mythical account of Arjuna's adventures in Munnipore should have been composed many centuries before the actual introduction of Brahmanism into the country. Yet such would appear to be the case, for the myth is referred to in the Vishnu Purána, which seems to have been composed in the eleventh century; whilst the evidence of Colonel MacCulloch is indisputable as regards the absence of all traces of Brahmanism prior to the eighteenth century. (See Wilson's Introduction to the Vishnu Purána.) From the allusion to the Chandels it would seem that the myth was composed in the North-Western Provinces, where the Chandels are to be found. See *ante*, p. 404, *note*.

referring to Krishna, from which nothing tangible can be inferred. The eleventh adventure contains the story of the son of Jayadratha being restored to life by Krishna; but the alleged miracle is in every way exceedingly dubious. The young man dies suddenly on hearing that Arjuna has entered the Raj; upon which Krishna takes him by the hand, and restores him to life. Here, if the myth were a true story, it is impossible to avoid the conviction that the young man did not die from so trifling a cause, but merely fell into a swoon, from which he was recovered by Krishna.

Dubious character of the miracle of Krishna's restoring a dead man to life.

The adventures of the horse being brought to a close, Krishna returned to Hastinápur, and was subsequently followed by Arjuna. The triumphant entry of Arjuna is described in the usual fashion. All the people of the city dressed out their houses, and put on their best attire, to welcome back the victorious prince. The armies of Arjuna, and those of the Rajas accompanying him, marched in grand array amidst the acclamations of the multitude. Garlands were thrown down from the verandahs, and money was scattered in all directions. Finally Yudhishthira gave a magnificent reception to all the Rajas assembled, and received each one so graciously that they are said to have all repented that they had not submitted at a much earlier period, and spent their entire lives in the service of so great a Raja.

Triumphant return of Arjuna with the sacrificial horse, an illustration of Hindú rejoicings.

Gracious character of Yudhishthira's reception of the Rajas.

The narrative of the third and concluding event in the performance of the Aswamedha resembles in some respects the description of the Rajasúya, inasmuch as it involves two distinct classes of ceremonies, namely:

3rd, Narrative of the sacrifice of the horse combined with the offering of homa.

First. The rites connected with the sacrifice of

the horse, which may be regarded as forming a part of the original Kshatriya tradition.

Secondly. The rites connected with the offering of the homa, which may be regarded as the details of a Brahmanical sacrifice, introduced by the Brahmanical compilers, for the purpose of imparting a Brahmanical tone to the performance of the Aswamedha.

The offering of the homa introduced as a Brahmanical sacrifice.

It will be seen hereafter that an attempt has been made to represent these two distinct classes of rites as forming a part of the ancient ceremony. The horse is apparently sacrificed in a paved area surrounded by pillars, whilst the homa is prepared and offered in eight sacrificial pits; but still the descriptions of the two rites are so carefully blended together in the Mahá Bhárata that it is difficult to separate them. When, however, consideration is given to the radical difference between the sacrifice of the horse and the offering of homa, and especially to the fierce opposition which prevailed between those who persisted in sacrificing animals and those who denounced the bloody offerings, it is impossible to arrive at any other conclusion, than that the account in the Mahá Bhárata is a compromise attempted by the later Brahmanical compilers to combine the simple offering of the homa with that sacrifice which formed the essential ceremony in the performance of an Aswamedha.

Seventeen stages in the performance of an Aswamedha.

Having thus indicated the difference between what appears to be two distinct narratives, it may now be as well to describe the Aswamedha as nearly as possible in the order in which the incidents appear in the Mahá Bhárata. The stages in the ceremony appear to have been seventeen in number, and are as follows :—

1st, The bathing of Raja Yudhishthira, and of Draupadí as his Rání.

2nd, The ploughing by Yudhishthira of the space set apart for the sacrifice with a golden plough.

3rd, The sowing of the space with different kinds of grain by Draupadí.

4th, The paving of the space with golden bricks.

5th, The eight pillars set up round the pavement.

6th, The eight pits prepared for the homa, with eight corresponding ladles.

7th, The collection of vegetables and medicinal herbs for the homa.

8th, The procession to bring water from the Ganges.

9th, The performance of the homa.

10th, The purification of the Raja and the horse with the Ganges water.

11th, The speaking of the horse.

12th, The sacrifice of the horse.

13th, The offering of the horse to the gods.

14th, The distribution of the merits of the Aswamedha.

15th, The disposal of the remains of the homa.

16th, The distribution of presents.

17th, The feast.

Description of the Aswamedha.

The narative of these several rites, as it appears in the Mahá Bhárata, may now be related as follows:—

Preparations.

Now all this while, the preparations were in progress for the performance of the Aswamedha sacrifice. A golden throne was set up on a high place for Maháraja Dhritaráshtra, and beneath that was another throne for Raja Yudhishthira; and

The thrones of gold and sandal-wood.

thrones of gold and sandal-wood were arranged for all the other Rajas and Chieftains according to their several

qualities and dignities; and the Maháraja and all the Rajas and Chieftains took their seats upon the thrones. And all the wives and other ladies of the Rajas came to the assembly, and were arranged and seated on their own side, each one in the place appointed for her. And when all assembled were closely seated, Raja Yudhishthira and Draupadí bathed themselves; and the space of ground required for the sacrifice was duly measured out, and a golden plough was brought, and two bullocks were harnessed to the plough. Then Raja Yudhishthira rose up, and with his own hand drove the bullocks and ploughed that space; and Draupadí followed the Raja, and carried a parcel of all the different grains which were grown in the Raj of Bhárata, and sprinkled the grain as fast as the Raja ploughed. And the Bráhmans sat along with the ladies, and whilst the Raja ploughed, both the Bráhmans and the ladies offered up prayers in his behalf with a loud voice. The space of ground was then covered with four hundred golden bricks; and the sage Vyása, accompanied by Vasishtha, and Nárada, and other Rishis, seated themselves on the golden pavement. The Raja then commanded that eight pillars should be set up round that golden pavement; and a roof covered with gold was placed over the pavement, and a banner was fixed on the top of each pillar. Then eight large pits were dug in order that the homa of milk, curds, and clarified butter might be prepared therein; and eight large sacrificial ladles were furnished for casting the homa on the sacrificial fire; and a large cloth of skins was sewed together, in which was placed a portion of every vegetable which is food for man, and a portion of every medicinal herb which were produced in that Raj, and the whole was put into the homa. And Vyása was appointed to be President of all the Bráhmans, who were to obey his orders as to the performance of the homa. And all the most famous Rishis were present at that sacrifice, and they selected the most distinguished persons to sit by the side of the place where the homa was performed. And Raja Yudhishthira sat with a deer's horn in his hand; and Vyása desired him to command that sixty-four of the

Assembly of the ladies.

Ploughing and sowing the land.

Prayers of the Bráhmans and ladies.

The pavement of gold bricks.

The eight pillars, pits, and ladles.

The vegetables and medicinal herbs.

Vyása president.

Sixty-four pots of water brought in procession from the Ganges.

principal Rajas and Rishis in the assembly should go with their wives to the bank of the Ganges; and that both they and their wives should each fill a pitcher with the Ganges water, and bring it to the place of the sacrifice. And Krishna and Arjuna and Bhíma, with a great party of Rajas and Rishis, each one accompanied by his wife, proceeded to the bank of the Ganges, all with pitchers on their heads; and along with them went a company of musicians with drums, and trumpets, and other musical instruments, and many dancing-girls likewise danced before them. And when those who had gone to the bank of the Ganges for water had filled all their pitchers, they took the pitchers on their heads, and returned to the place of the sacrifice, preceded by the musicians, and the singers, and the dancing-girls.

Distribution of dresses.

Then Raja Yudhishthira commanded that splendid dresses should be brought for all those who had carried the water, and he caused both the Rajas and their wives to be dressed therewith, and he put a chain of choice jewels on each of their necks, and put betel nut into each of their mouths. And he ordered fires to be lighted in the pits that were dug for the homa, and the various ingredients for the homa to be presented to the fire. Then the Raja's brethren, and kinsmen, and servants brought several loads of gold and jewels and clothes, together with many elephants, horses, and cows, and gave to each Bráhman in such quantities that all were fully satisfied and contented.

Performance of the homa.

Ganges water poured over the head of the Raja and the head of the horse.

After this, a throne made of sandal-wood, covered with gold, was brought for Raja Yudhishthira. And the Raja sat thereon, and those around him took off his clothes; and all those persons who had brought water from the Ganges, took up their pitchers and poured the water over the Raja's head. The horse was then brought, and the remainder of the water with which the Raja had been bathed was poured upon the horse's head. Then Nákula opened the mouth of the horse, and held up his head, and said:—"The horse is speaking!" And those around cried out:—"What does the horse say?" Nákula replied:—"The horse says:—'In other Yagas wherein a horse is sacrificed, he goes to Swarga, which is the

Speech of the horse.

heaven of Indra; but I shall go far above Swarga, because in the present Yaga very many great and distinguished persons, such as Krishna, are here assembled together; and Krishna has not been present at other sacrifices, for which reason I shall go far beyond all other sacrificial horses.'"

Purity of the horse ascertained by Dhaumya.

Then the horse was washed, and the scimitar was brought, and Dhaumya put the scimitar into the hands of Bhíma and bade him slay the horse. And Bhíma lifted up the scimitar to give the horse a blow, when Dhaumya said:—"O Bhíma, have patience a minute while I try the horse." So Dhaumya took hold of the horse's ear and squeezed it, when suddenly milk ran out to the astonishment of all present. Dhaumya then said to Bhima:—"I see that this horse is pure, and I am certain that this sacrifice is acceptable and will be accepted: Now strike!" So Bhíma struck a blow, and cut off the head of the horse; and no sooner was the head severed from the body, than it mounted towards the sky and soared out of sight, and the body fell down upon the spot. Then Krishna, and the other Rajas, and the Rishis, came up and opened the horse's belly; and when they had divided it a light came out of the belly, and no ordure was found therein." And Krishna said:—"O Raja Yudhishthira, I have never beheld so clean and pure a horse; and I am now assured that this sacrifice of yours has reached the heaven of Vishnu."

Bhima slaughters the horse.

The horse's head mounts to the sky.

Offering of the flesh of the horse to Indra and the gods.

After Bhíma had opened the belly of the horse, the flesh began to smell of camphor; and Dhaumya took out the camphor-like flesh with the sacrificial ladles, and cast it upon the fire and made homa of it, and said:—"Indra, take this flesh which has become camphor!" At that moment, Indra, with a crowd of gods, entered the assembly. All present then paid their respects to Indra, who came up to Vyása, and took the remainder of the flesh that was become camphor, and gave a portion of it to each of the gods; and the smoke that arose from that fire was all perfumed.

Krishna congratulates Yudhishthira.

Then Krishna arose and came forward, and embraced Raja Yudhishthira, and gave him joy of his sacrifice, and said:—"Be the sacrifice prosperous; for no one has ever performed the like, and the fame of it will last as long as the

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world endures." Raja Yudhishthira replied:—"All that has come to me has been entirely by your favour." Then Krishna, with all the Rajas and principal Rishis, poured pitchers of water over Yudhishthira and Draupadí, and bathed them. Then all that remained of the medicinal herbs that had been brought to make the homa, was reduced to powder, and a ball of it was given to each of the persons present to eat; and by so doing Raja Yudhishthira gave to each one a share of the merit of that Aswamedha Yaga; and last of all Raja Yudhishthira partook of it himself. Then all the musical instruments struck up a symphony of rejoicing for the close of the Yaga; and Kuntí with all her maidens and dependents manifested every sign of joy, and bestowed great quantities of effects and goods in gratitude to the gods who had enabled her son to perform so great a Yaga and had accepted the sacrifice. And all the materials for the homa were collected into one place, and the Bráhmans uttered blessings over them, and threw them all at once into the fire.

Distribution of the merits of the Aswamedha.

General rejoicings.

Yudhishthira's apologies to Vyása the sage.

After this, Raja Yudhishthira arose and approached Vyása, and said:—"This Yaga, by your exertions and favour, is now brought to a close; how can I make sufficient apologies to you for your trouble?" Vyása replied:—"O Raja, you are my son, and it is my duty to sympathize with you in your concerns; therefore you have no need for making any apologies to me." The Raja then assigned over to Vyása certain estates well inhabited and cultivated, with abundance of goods and chattels; and Vyása transferred the whole of them as free gifts to the Bráhmans. Raja Yudhishthira then gave to each of the Bráhmans who had performed the homa, and to each of those who had assisted in the Yaga, a chariot, an elephant, ten horses of the first quality, four maunds of gold, a hundred milch cows with gilded horns, two seers and a half of pearls, and four intelligent slaves, who had learned the Vedas and all other sciences; and to all the other Bráhmans, who had been present but had not taken a part in the ceremony, Raja Yudhishthira gave half as much. And when the Raja had finished bestowing his largesses upon the Bráhmans, he

Assigns estates to Vyása, who transfers them to the Bráhmans.

Proportions of gifts to the Bráhmans.

Yudhishthira's apologies to the Rajas.

turned to the Rajas, and made apologies to each; and he gave to each of the great Rajas a thousand horses of the first quality, and a hundred war elephants, and one crore of gold coin; and to each of the Raja's wives he gave everything that was necessary for a bride on her wedding night, including gold and precious jewels and splendid clothes. Yudhishthira then gave to each of the sons, and kinsmen, and friends of Krishna, twice as much as he had given to the Rajas; and he went respectfully to Krishna, and said:—"I have nothing worthy of your acceptance; but since the Yaga has been completed under your favour, I make a free offering of all its acquired merits to you."

Distribution of gifts.

Double gifts to Krishna's family.

Raja Yudhishthira then said to his brother Bhíma:—"Take all the Bráhmans and feast them!" So Bhíma feasted all the Bráhmans with the best of victuals and drink in golden trays and vessels; and after the feast he gave the whole of the golden vessels to those Bráhmans. The assembly then broke up, and all the Rajas returned to their own quarters; and the next day Krishna took leave, and set off for Dwáraká; and all the other Rajas took leave in like manner and set off for their respective countries.

Bhíma feasts the Bráhmans.

Departure of the Rajas.

The foregoing description of the Aswamedha of Raja Yudhishthira requires but little further comment. The rite of bathing calls for no remark, as it was and is performed at every important ceremony practised by the Hindús, and indeed is especially enjoined as a purifying rite by the Brahmanical law. The rite, in which the Raja ploughed the land set apart for the sacrifice, and the Ráni sowed specimens of all the grains that grew in the Raj, was no doubt an ancient ceremony expressive of sovereignty, and appears to have been of Scythian or Buddhist origin. According to a Scythian tradition preserved by Herodotus, a golden plough fell from heaven at a remote period, and was for ever afterwards preserved by the

Review of the foregoing description of the Aswamedha.

Ploughing the place of sacrifice a Scythian or Buddhist custom.

Scythian tradition of a golden plough.

Royal Tribe as one of the emblems of royalty.[20] It is also still more remarkable that a golden plough was used by Buddhist sovereigns at the consecration of a monastery or temple; and a graphic description has been preserved in the Mahawanso of the performance of this ceremony by a monarch who reigned in the third century before the Christian era. The ground was first sprinkled with red sandal-wood, after which two elephants were harnessed to the golden plough, and the Buddhist Raja ploughed along the boundary line, accompanied by the priests and guarded by officials carrying staves of gold and silver. A large company of troops marched in procession, together with beautiful females carrying umbrellas and other decorations, and musicians playing every description of instrument; whilst gorgeous flags tingling with bells were carried in the air, as well as painted vases, glass mirrors, and garlands and baskets of flowers. In this way the Buddhist Raja ploughed the land, passing through many triumphant arches made of plantain trees, whilst a vast multitude waved their handkerchiefs in the air and rent the skies with their enthusiastic acclamations.[21]

Description in the Mahawanso of the ploughing of consecrated ground by a Buddhist sovereign.

The Buddhist procession.

To return, however, to the Aswamedha of Raja Yudhishthira. The attempt may now be made to separate those details which appear to belong to the Brahmanical offerings of the homa, from those which seem to refer to the sacrifice of the horse. The homa, consisting chiefly of ghee, was prepared in eight sacrificial pits, and was presented to the gods

Description of the offering of the homa.

[20] Herodotus, Book IV. c. 5. It should be remarked that the plough was accompanied by a yoke, or battle-axe, and a drinking-cup.

[21] Mahawanso, *Turnour's translation*, pages 98, 99. The Chinese traveller, Fa Hian, seems to have witnessed a similar ceremony which, like the above, was performed in the island of Ceylon. Travels of Fa Hian, chap. xxxix.

in sacrificial ladles through the medium of fire; and on the present occasion samples of every vegetable, and every medicinal herb growing in the Raj, are said to have been likewise thrown into the homa. When the presentation of homa was over, the remaining portion of the medicinal herbs was reduced to powder and formed into balls; and a ball was given to each person present. By this rite the Raja was supposed to give to one and all a share of the religious merits which had been acquired by the performance of the sacrifice, and which was supposed to wipe off from the account of good and evil deeds, an indefinite number of the evil actions which had been previously committed by the individuals concerned. It should also be remarked that the offering of the homa was exclusively performed by Bráhmans, under the superintendence of the mythical Vyása, and in the presence of all the Rishis who are famous in Brahmanical tradition.

Vegetables and medicinal herbs thrown into the homa.

Distribution of the religious merit acquired by the homa.

Bráhmans alone engaged.

It will now be seen that the sacrifice of the horse was carried out in a very different fashion; and that the rite was performed not by Bráhmans, but by two of the Pándavas. The place of sacrifice is said to have been paved with bricks of gold; and this costly arrangement was no doubt often carried out when the Aswamedha was performed by a rich and conquering Raja. Solomon overlaid not only the altars but the very temple itself with plates of gold; and amongst the treasures of Crœsus were a number of golden bricks which may possibly have been cast for a similar purpose.[22] Round the place of sacrifice eight pillars were set up, to which the horse, and perhaps other animals, were tied. The rite was per-

Description of the sacrifice of the horse.

Golden bricks or plates employed in ancient times.

The victims tied to pillars.

Rite performed by Nákula and Sahadeva.

[22] Herodotus, Book I. c. 50.

formed by Nákula and Bhíma, although various attempts are made, chiefly involving the introduction of some supernatural detail, to impart a Brahmanical tone even to this portion of the narrative. Thus when Nákula declared that the horse was speaking, he was probably acting in accordance with a crude notion that a victim before sacrifice was capable of prophesying. But the language put into the mouth of the animal is eminently Brahmanical; for the horse is said to have exulted in the idea that instead of going like other sacrificial horses to the heaven of Indra, he was going beyond it, that is, to the heaven of Vishnu, because of the presence of Krishna. Again Dhaumya, the family priest, is introduced, to give the scimitar to Bhíma, and to perform the senseless miracle of squeezing milk out of the horse's ear. The whole concludes with a miracle, in which the flesh of the horse approximates to camphor, and is finally converted by Dhaumya into homa. Here the Brahmanical rite distinctly overlays the original rite; for it is certain that in the ancient performance of an Aswamedha, the flesh of the horse was cooked upon the fire, and was both presented to the gods and eaten by the assembled guests.[23] The statement that the head of the horse ascended to heaven is also a miracle, but originates in a Vedic idea rather than in the prolific imaginations of the Brahmanical compilers.[24]

Speech of the horse a Brahmanical interpolation.

Unmeaning introduction of the Bráhman Dhaumya.

Conversion of the horseflesh into camphor and homa.

Vedic idea of the ascent of the horse's head.

[23] The first Aswamedha hymn in the Rig-Veda describes the boiling and roasting of different portions of the flesh, the presentation of a part to the gods, and the eating of a part by the persons present. See Wilson's *Translation*, Vol. II. p. 121, *note*.

[24] See the second Aswamedha hymn in the Rig-Veda, Wilson's *Translation*, Vol. II. p. 123, in which the worshipper is supposed to be reciting the following verse:—"I recognize in my mind thy form afar off, going from the earth below,

One other incident seems to require some explanation. It has already been stated that the horse was originally sacrificed to the Sun; and yet in both the Mahá Bhárata and the Rámáyana the horse is said to have been offered to Indra. This change of deity seems to involve a new stage in the development of the Hindú religion. The worship of the Sun as a material existence had been superseded by the worship of a more human deity and protector in the person of Indra; just in the same way that the worship of the human hero Indra was subsequently superseded by the worship of the great Spirit Vishnu. The circumstances which led to this change in the national religion may be easily conjectured. The Sun is the deity of temperate climates, for it is he who ripens the harvests; but in a tropical climate like India the favourite deity is the one who sends the rain; and the Vedic deity who sends the rain is Indra, the god of the firmament. The subject is a curious one, and will be discussed in a future volume under the head of religion.

Sacrifice of the horse to Indra, instead of to the Sun, indicative of an ancient change in the national religion.

by way of Heaven, to the Sun: I behold thy head soaring aloft, and mounting quickly by unobstructed paths, unsullied by dust."

CHAPTER XVII.

FINAL TRAGEDIES.

THE story of the Mahá Bhárata virtually ends with the Aswamedha of Raja Yudhishthira. The great war was over; the Pándavas had slain all their enemies; and Yudhishthira had not only been inaugurated in the Raj, but had celebrated the great horse sacrifice which established his sovereignty. A period of thirty-six years is said to have followed, at the expiration of which the Raj of the Pándavas was brought to a close. This period was marked by three incidents; the first of which occurred within a few years of Yudhishthira's inauguration, whilst the other two are connected with the termination of his reign. These three incidents are as follows:—

Duration of the Raj of the Pándavas for thirty-six years.

Three incidents during the period.

1st, The exile and death of Mahárája Dhritaráshtra.

2nd, The destruction of Dwáraká and death of Krishna.

3rd, The exile and death of the Pándavas.

1st. The exile and death of Mahárája Dhritaráshtra.

The narrative of the exile and death of the blind old Mahárája requires no preliminary explanation. It involves, however, a wonderful miracle performed by the sage Vyása, which stands out as one of the finest products of Hindú imagination which can be

found in the Mahá Bhárata. The narrative may be left to tell its own story:—

Peace and prosperity.

Now after Raja Yudhishthira had performed the great Aswamedha Yaga, the Pándavas lived for many years in peace and prosperity under Maháraja Dhritaráshtra in the city of Hastinápur. But though the Pándavas had succeeded the Kauravas in the rule of the Raj, and were zealous in the performance of every filial duty towards their uncle the Maháraja, yet Dhritaráshtra could never forget the death of his own sons, and could never forgive Bhíma for having slain Duryodhana. And there sprung up many bitter disputes between Bhíma and the Maháraja, and Bhíma treated his blind uncle with insult, and refused to obey his commands; and Dhritaráshtra determined to live at a distance from the brethren. And Dhritaráshtra departed out of Hastinápur, and went away to live in the jungle on the bank of the Ganges; and he took with him his wife Gándhárí, and Kuntí, who was his brother's widow, and Vidura, and all the older members of the family; and they abode there on the bank of the Ganges.

Bitter disputes between Bhíma and the Maháraja.

The Maháraja departs with Gándhárí and Kuntí to the jungle on the Ganges.

Visit of the Pándavas to the Maháraja.

And it came to pass that after some years, the Pándavas were desirous of paying their respects to Maháraja Dhritaráshtra and the Rání Gándhárí, and to see again all their aged kinsfolk who had sought an abiding place in the jungle. And the five brethren went forth with their wife Draupadí, and paid a visit to the Maháraja, and all were rejoiced to see them; but when they asked for Vidura, they were told that he had gone to the bank of the Ganges to die by fasting; and they hastened to the place where Vidura was, and when they came up to him he was speechless, and gave up the ghost.

Death of Vidura.

The sage Vyása promises to assemble the ghosts of all who were slain in the great war of Mahá Bhárata.

After this, whilst all were talking together of the husbands, and the sons, and the kinsfolk whom they had lost in the great war of Mahá Bhárata, the sage Vyása appeared amongst them, and said:—"I will this day heal all your griefs: Go you all to the river Ganges, and bathe therein, and there each one of you shall behold the kinsmen for whom you have been sorrowing." So they all went

down to the river, and chose a bathing-place for themselves and families; and Vyása said to them:—"You shall see this night all those whom you desire." And the day passed away so slowly that it seemed like a whole year to them, but at last the sun went down, and they all bathed in the river by command of Vyása, and said their prayers, and went and stood near him; and Raja Yudhishthira and his brethren were on the side of Vyása, and Maháraja Dhritaráshtra stood before them, and everybody else stood wherever places could be found. Vyása then went into the water, and prayed and bathed; and he then came out and stood by Dhritaráshtra and Yudhishthira, and called out the names of each of the persons who had been slain, one by one. At that moment the river began to foam and boil, and a great noise was heard rising out of the waters, as though all the slain men were once again alive, and as though they and their elephants and their horses were bursting into loud cries, and all the drums and trumpets and other instruments of music of both armies were striking up together. The whole assembly were astonished at this mighty tempest, and some were smitten with a terrible fear, when suddenly they saw Bhíshma and Drona in full armour seated in their chariots, and ascending out of the waters, with all their armies arrayed as they were on the first day of the Mahá Bhárata. Next came forth Abhimanyu, the heroic son of Arjuna, and the five sons of Draupadí, and the son of Bhíma with his army of Asuras. After them came Karna, and Duryodhana, and Sakuni, and Duhsásana, and the other sons of Dhritaráshtra, all in full parade seated upon their chariots, together with many other warriors and Rajas who had been slain. All appeared in great glory and splendour, and more beautiful than when they were alive; and all came with their own horses and chariots and banners and arms. And every one was in perfect friendship with each other, for enmity had departed from amongst them; and each one was preceded by his bards and eulogists who sang his praises; and very many singing men and dancing girls appeared with them, singing and dancing. Now when these

The widows of the slain bathe and pray in the Ganges.

Vyása summons the ghosts.

The armies reappear in all their pomp as when alive.

Perfect friendship between the Kauravas and Pándavas.

Joy of the living in the company of the dead.

warriors had come out of the river, their widows and orphans and kinsfolk were overjoyed, and not a trace of grief remained amongst them; and widows went to their husbands, and daughters to their fathers, and mothers to their sons, and sisters to their brothers, and all the fifteen years of sorrow which had passed since the war of the Mahá Bhárata were forgotten in the ecstasy of seeing each other again. Thus the night passed away in the fulness of joy; but when the morning had dawned, all the dead mounted their chariots and horses, and disappeared; and those who had gathered together to behold them prepared to depart. And Vyása the sage said that the widows who wished to rejoin their dead husbands might do so; and all the widows went and bathed in the Ganges, and came out of the water again, and kissed, one by one, the feet of Dhritaráshtra and Gándhárí; and then went and drowned themselves in the river; and through the prayers of Vyása they all went to the places they wished, and obtained their several desires.

Disappearance of the dead at the dawn.

The widows drown themselves in the Ganges and rejoin their husbands.

After this, Raja Yudhishthira and his brethren, and their wife Draupadí, took their leave of Maháraja Dhritaráshtra and the Rání Gándhárí, and returned to the city of Hastinápur. And after many days Nárada the sage came to the palace of Yudhishthira, and said:—"The jungle has been set on fire, and the flames have been nourished by a strong wind; and the Maháraja and the Rání, and all their kinsfolk and friends, have perished in the burning, and your mother Kuntí has perished also." And the Pándavas were smitten with horror and sorrow, and darkness fell upon them. But when some days had passed away, they were thrown into a deeper consternation; for very fearful omens appeared on all sides, and they felt that something very terrible was about to happen, and they knew not when or how it would happen.

Terrible death of the Maháraja and all his household in a jungle fire.

Fearful omens at Hastinápur.

The foregoing narrative calls for but little comment. The exile of the Maháraja serves to prove the hollow character of his reconciliation with the

Review of the foregoing narrative.

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Pándavas, to which attention has already been drawn. But the glorious scene in which the dead who had fallen in the great war arose out of the river Ganges, arrayed in all the pomp and magnificence of battle, forms one of the grandest pictures ever presented to the human eye. The conception of the resurrection of the dead on the last day is perhaps more terribly suggestive, but the bursting open of the sepulchres by the shrouded inmates, and the horrible contrast between the saved and the damned, fills the imagination with pain and gloom. The idea in the Mahá Bhárata, however, is one of perfect joy. Trumpets are sounding, banners are waving, and the air is filled with the noise of horses and elephants and chariots, as the vast armies of warriors appear in glory and brightness out of the dark river, arrayed in all the imposing paraphernalia of war. All enmity, however, has departed from amongst them; and all are in perfect friendship with each other; whilst bards and eulo ists are singing before them, and companies of beautiful girls are dancing in the midnight air. Moreover, the contrast between the women and the warriors is one which brings all the purest affections into play. Wives and mothers, sisters and daughters, are once again in the company of those whom they most loved, and in the enjoyment of the highest felicity after long years of bereavement and sorrow. The glorious and affecting scene is at length brought to a conclusion by an incident somewhat tragic in itself, but still in accordance with Hindú ideas of happiness. At the dawn of the morning, the vision disappears, and the poor widows are again overwhelmed with grief; but by the permission of the

Grandeur of the picture of the resurrection of the dead who had fallen in the great war.

Compared with the last day.

Perfect bliss involved in the description in the Mahá Bhárata.

Affecting proceedings of the women.

Hindú character of the scene.

sage, they take a touching farewell of their friends and relatives, and then drown themselves in the sacred river, and thus once again join their husbands in another world.

Horrible character of the jungle fire.

The remaining portion of the narrative is more melancholy. The awful death of the Maháraja and all his household in a jungle fire, is an event which to this day excites a sympathizing horror, for it is sudden, terrible, and overwhelming. In the case of the Pándavas, however, their consternation was increased by portentous omens; and thus they were not only oppressed by their present grief, but by the constant apprehension that something still more fearful was about to happen.

2nd. The destruction of Dwáraká.

The alarming event which they were thus hourly anticipating at length came to pass. Tidings were suddenly brought to them of a frightful series of disasters which had taken place at Dwáraká, the city of Krishna and the Yádavas; but here, to avoid anticipating, it will be better to leave the narrative to tell its own story:—

Wickedness and profanity of the people of Dwáraká.

Now all this while the great city of Dwáraká, which was situated upon the sea, had been filled with mirth and feasting; and all the people drank wine in abundance, and the young men, who were the sons and grandsons of Krishna, scoffed at the Bráhmans, and at sacred things.

The three great Rishis visit the city.

And three great Rishis of the highest class, whose names were Viswámitra, Durvásas, and Nárada, were sojourning in the city of the Yádavas; and the youths of the place assembled together, and saw the three sages engaged in their devotions, and amongst them was Sámba, the son of Krishna.

Trick played by the young men upon the Rishis

And the young men for sport dressed up Sámba to represent a woman with child, and they led him in this disguise into the presence of the three Bráhmans, and requested to know whether she would give birth to a son or to a daughter.

Threats of the Rishis.

The Rishis replied:—"We well know whom you have brought before us; this is not a woman but a son of Krishna, and verily he shall bring forth an iron club which shall destroy the whole race of Yadu: And since you have preferred an evil life to a virtuous one, and have sought to scoff at and ridicule such poor men as we are, you and all your people shall perish by that club, except Balaráma, and he too shall leave the world shortly afterwards." So saying, the three Rishis drew over their shoulders the deer-skins on which they had been seated, and went out of Dwáraká, and made their way to the city of Hastinápur. And when the young men heard the words of the three Rishis, they repented of what they had done; and the news spread abroad amongst the people of the city, and they were sore afraid; and some carried the account to Krishna, and he said:—"If it is the will of God it will surely come to pass."

Their departure.

Krishna issues a proclamation against wine.

After this, Krishna issued a proclamation throughout Dwáraká, that whoever drank wine henceforth should be put to death with all his family. Then the people of the city abstained from the use of wine, and no man ventured even to utter its name. But at this time a fearful apparition showed itself at the doors of all the houses, and men said that it was death in a human shape; and its colour was black and yellow, and its head was shorn, and all its limbs were distorted; and all who saw the apparition were filled with fear and trembling, and if a man discharged an arrow at it, the figure disappeared, and no one knew whither it had gone. Meantime, a great wind arose, and uprooted many trees, and carried away many men and beasts, and blew about the doors of the houses until they were nearly all broken. And the rats increased in so prodigious a manner that thousands and thousands swarmed in every house, and carried off and spoilt everything that was put away; and they ran about the bazaars, and they gnawed away the hair and beards of the men who were asleep. And owls flocked to the houses of the people in great numbers, and screeched throughout the night; and the nightingales

Fearful apparition.

Great wind.

Portentous increase of rats and owls.

and minas were scared by the noise of the rats, and the hooting of the owls, and continued their wailings both by night and day. And monstrous births filled the land, for the cows brought forth asses, and the swine produced lions' cubs, and the dogs produced kittens, and the weasels brought forth young mice. And vice and evil pervaded the whole race of Yadu; and the poor men and the devotees were openly reviled; and preceptors and learned men were treated with disrespect; and the women overruled the men, and fire refused to give light, and the flames of fire became black and blue. And the sun was surrounded at its rising and its setting by thousands of spectres of men without heads, who engaged in battle with swords and spears in their hands. And the Yogis and other devotees found that if they rose from the skins upon which they sat, those skins were changed into vermin. And the moon was eclipsed on its twelfth day, and the sun was eclipsed on the twenty-seventh day of the moon.

Evil omens and general depravity.

Meantime Krishna issued a proclamation that on the morrow all the people of the city should go to the sea-shore at Prabhása, and pay their devotions to the deity of Dwáraká. At that same time a dreadful apparition came to the city of a black woman, clothed in black garments, and having yellow teeth; and this woman went from house to house, grinning at all who were therein, and filling them with terror and dismay; and if any one attempted to seize her, she vanished from that place and showed herself at another, and thus she continued until she had gone over the whole city. And that same night evil spirits came and carried off the jewels of the women, and the weapons of the men, and no one had the power to recover either the one or the other. The chakra of Krishna was also suddenly taken up to heaven, and all the people saw it, and were filled with grief, and raised a great uproar. At the same time, the charioteer of Krishna harnessed his master's chariot; and upon this the horses bounded up into the air, and bore away the chariot over the sea, and disappeared for ever. Also the figure of a palmyra, which was on the standard of

Proclamation of Krishna that the people should go and worship at Prabhása.

Apparition of a black woman.

Jewels and weapons carried off by evil spirits.

Chakra of Krishna ascends to heaven.

His chariot and horses disappear in the sea.

Disappearance of the ensigns of Balaráma and Krishna.

Balaráma, and the figure of the bird Garura, which was on the standard of Krishna, both separated themselves from their respective standards and rose into the air until they vanished from the sight. Also Apsaras appeared in the sky, and cried out to the people:—"Arise and be gone!" And this cry was heard in every house throughout the city of Dwáraká.

Warning of the Apsaras.

The people permitted to drink wine at the festival at Prabhása.

And when the morning arrived, the people obeyed the proclamation of Krishna, and Krishna gave them permission to drink wine on that day only; and they set out with their wives and families to the place of pilgrimage on the sea-shore, and they carried with them wine and provisions of every description; and some took up their stations in tents, and others beneath trees. And when all the people were settled in their respective places, Krishna commanded that every variety of victuals and drink should be set apart and given to the Bráhmans; and when the Bráhmans were about to eat, a certain man of the Yádava tribe came up with a large jar of wine in his hand, from which he had been drinking until he was intoxicated; and he spilt a little of the wine upon the victuals set apart for the Bráhmans; so the Bráhmans would not eat thereof, and Krishna ordered that the victuals should be given to the monkeys.

Insult offered to the Brahmans.

General conviviality.

Meantime the feast proceeded without interruption. And the jugglers, and the musicians, the dancers, and the players of all kinds exhibited their performances before the people; whilst the people all drank wine very largely. And all the Chieftains of the tribe of Yadu were present at that feast. There were Raja Ugrasena, and Balaráma, and Sátyaki, and Kritarvarman, and the two sons of Krishna, and many others of renown. Now Balaráma, the elder brother of Krishna, was a great drinker of wine, and he ordered vessels of wine to be brought into the assembly and placed before each Chieftain; and the assembly seated themselves in parties, so that those who were most intimate drank wine together. Thus Balaráma and Kritavarman drank by themselves, and the sons of Krishna drank with Sátyaki.

The Chieftains drink wine in parties.

Sátyaki insults Kritavarman for aiding in the revenge of Aswatthama.

Now Kritavarman, who drank with Balaráma, was one

of the three who had slaughtered the sleeping men in the camp of the Pándavas; and Sátyaki, who was sitting near him, having got exceedingly drunk, suddenly cast his eye upon him, and said:—"Behold, my friends, this Kshatriya here, who boasts so much of his prowess! He went one night with Aswatthâma, and attacked a number of boys, and killed them in the night time; and these are the men who boast of their bravery." Pradyumna, the son of Krishna, then cried out:—"Well said, Sátyaki!" And Krishna also was no friend to Kritavarman, for in the feud about the jewel, Kritavarman had murdered Satyajit, who was the father of Krishna's wife Satyabhâma; and Krishna said to Sátyaki:—"Tell the story of how Kritavarman murdered Satyajit, and robbed him of his jewel!"[1] Sátyaki then repeated the story of the jewel, and said:—"This Kritavarman is moreover the same man who went out with Aswatthâma, and unjustly slew Dhrishta-dyumna, and many thousands of innocent people: But his days are numbered." So saying, Sátyaki drew his sword and ran at Kritavarman before all the assembly; and whilst Kritavarman was rising up to defend himself, Sátyaki struck him on the neck with his sword with all his might, so that his head was severed from his body and fell upon the ground. Then many kinsmen of Kritavarman rushed upon Sátyaki, and many of Sátyaki's friends ran up to oppose them, and there was a great uproar and bloodshed. Krishna endeavoured to quell the tumult, but no one heeded him; and the friends of Kritavarman cut down Sátyaki and slew him, and also cut down Pradyumna, the son of Krishna, and slew him before his father's face. Krishna then revenged himself by killing all the murderers of his son; but the whole assembly was then frantic with blood and wine, and each man fell madly upon his neighbour; for in their bewilderment they knew not what they did, except that they struck each other and died; and fathers slew their sons, and sons their fathers, and brethren and kinsmen murdered each other. In this manner all the

Encouraged by Krishna.

Sátyaki slays Kritavarman.

General tumult.

Sudden murders.

Horrible confusion and bloodshed.

Slaughter of all the Yádavas.

[1] The feud about the jewel will be found related in the legends of Krishna in Part III.

Yádavas were slaughtered by the curse of the three Rishis, and all the sons and grandsons of Krishna were amongst the slain.

Krishna goes out to Balaráma.

While Krishna was horror-stricken at this sudden calamity, his charioteer came to him, and said that Balaráma had gone out of the assembly just after the beginning of the tumult. So Krishna mounted his chariot, accompanied by another Chieftain, and set forward in search of his elder brother; and when they had gone a little distance, they beheld Balaráma seated under the shade of a banyan tree, and his eyes were closed, and he was absorbed in a deep meditation. Krishna then said to his charioteer:—"You have seen what has befallen this people: Go now with all speed to the city of Hastinápur, and inform Raja Yudhishthira of all that has occurred, and desire him to send Arjuna to Dwáraká with all speed." And the charioteer mounted the chariot by himself, and drove off in hot haste to the city of Hastinápur. Krishna then said to the Chieftain who was with him:—"You also have seen what calamity has befallen us: So go you back to the city of Dwáraká, and look to the safety of the women and houses, lest thieves and Daityas should plunder the city and outrage the women: Have a care also for my father Vasudeva, who has been left behind in the city; and tell him that in the seventh day from this, which will be the full moon of the month Kartika, the sea will arise and swallow up Dwáraká." And the Chieftain returned in all haste towards Dwáraká, but on his way a drunken fisherman fell upon him and slew him; and some one who was looking on carried the news to Krishna. Then Krishna said to his brother Balaráma:—"I am afraid lest mischief be committed in the city: Stay you here whilst I haste thither, and return again." So Krishna went to Dwáraká, and told his father Vasudeva of the slaughter of all their kinsmen and friends; and Vasudeva was exceedingly moved and began to weep very bitterly. And Krishna said to his father:—"This is no time for grief; I have despatched my charioteer to bring Arjuna hither; so do you bestir yourself that no evil may befall the women before he

Sends his charioteer to Hastinápur.

Sends a Chieftain to Dwáraká, who is slain by a fisherman.

Krishna proceeds to Dwáraká.

arrives: And now we must take leave of each other, as I must return to Balaráma, who is waiting for me; Heretofore I saw all the Kauravas perish, and now I have seen all the Yádavas perish also; and I will return no more to this city, but I and Balaráma will retire into the jungle, and pass the remainder of our lives in devotion." With these words Krishna embraced his father's feet, and all the women and slave girls set up a terrible cry of lamentation. Krishna then returned to his brother Balaráma, but found that he had given up the ghost whilst seated against the tree; and Krishna was exceedingly troubled, and went into a thicket which was hard by, and rested his head upon his knees in deep contemplation, when a hunter, who was passing by, saw him, and thought he was a wild animal, and discharged his arrow and slew him upon the spot. Thus died the mighty Krishna.

Returns to Balaráma and finds him dead.

Krishna slain by a hunter.

Meantime, the charioteer proceeded to Hastinápur, and told to Raja Yudhishthira and his brethren how the Yádavas had all slaughtered each other. The Raja swooned away at the news, and when he had recovered, Arjuna obtained his permission to depart that moment for the city of Dwáraká. So Arjuna set off with all haste, and found the city like a widow mourning for her husband; and when the wives of Krishna set their eyes upon him they filled the air with their cries; and the whole city echoed back their lamentations, for all the women there had lost husbands or sons, fathers or brothers, in the great quarrel. At this sight Arjuna was so distracted that for a long time all his strength seemed to have forsaken him, but after a while he asked for Vasudeva, and then went to see him. And Vasudeva wept very much, and Arjuna out of sympathy wept with him; and all the women of the city came thither, with their hair dishevelled and their eyes filled with tears; and when they saw Arjuna they made altogether such a melancholy noise as was never heard before. And after much weeping, Vasudeva told to Arjuna the cause of all the dreadful slaughter which had taken place, and prayed him to do what seemed to him best with the women and treasures.

Krishna's charioteer carries the tidings to the Pándavas.

Arjuna proceeds to Dwáraká.

Terrible lamentations of the widows.

Arjuna directs all the residue of the people to leave the city.

Arjuna then proceeded with the charioteer of Krishna to the Council hall, and summoned all the Bráhmans who had survived the great disaster; and when they beheld him they all burst into a fit of weeping; but Arjuna bade them not to waste the time in useless sorrow, but to prepare for departing from the doomed city, for that after seven days Dwáraká would be overwhelmed by the sea.

Death of Vasudeva.

And Arjuna passed that night in the palace of Krishna, and when it was morning he bathed himself, and prepared to pay a visit to Vasudeva; when at that moment he heard a cry of lamentation, more terrible than ever, issue from the house of Vasudeva; and thousands of women ran about with their hair dishevelled, and their bosoms bare, and their garments rent; and they were beating their breasts and filling the air with their screams; and it was told to Arjuna that Vasudeva had given up the ghost. So Arjuna arose up in deep sorrow, and ordered the dead body to be carried to the spot where Krishna had performed an Aswamedha Yaga; for Vasudeva during his life-time had given orders that his dead body should be burned there. And the same Bráhmans who had performed the Yaga now collected wood and perfumes; and Arjuna himself cast the body, upon the pile, and the Bráhmans lighted the pile: and four of Vasudeva's widows burned themselves upon the pile along with the body of their dead husband.

Burning of Vasudeva with four of his widows.

Funeral ceremonies of the slain at Prabhása.

When Arjuna had thus performed the funeral ceremonies for Vasudeva, he went to the spot where all the Yádavas had slain each other; and when he saw the dead men lying about the field he was horror-stricken beyond description. And he commanded a very great quantity of fuel and inflammable materials to be brought and kindled; and he ordered that all the bodies of such as could be recognized should be thrown thereon and burnt; and he sent all the people to make strict search for the bodies of Krishna and Balaráma, and having found them, he caused them to be burned with much precious odours. Arjuna then performed the funeral rites for all those who were dead, and sprinkled water for their souls.

Having thus completed the obsequies, Arjuna ordered that all people should quit the city of Dwáraká on the sixth day, and prepare to journey to the city of Indra-prastha. So on that day all the men and women of the city, and all the male and female slaves, and all the people of the bazaars, and all Krishna's sixteen thousand wives, each with her own waiting maid, and all the kinsmen, and dependents, and slave girls of the royal house, departed out of Dwáraká, and were conducted by Arjuna along the road towards Indra-prastha; but scarcely had Arjuna and all this mighty multitude left the city, when the sea rose in a great heap in the sight of all the people, and overwhelmed Dwáraká and all that remained in it. And when the multitude beheld the rushing of the waters, they hastened on in great alarm lest the sea should overtake them, and overwhelm them in like manner.

Residue of the people depart with Arjuna.

The city of Dwáraká overwhelmed by a cyclone.

Now all the tribes that lived round about were robbers and Daityas of the worst character; and when they heard that a mighty caravan of very many women, and but few men, was passing through their neighbourhood with vast treasures of gold and jewels, they surrounded the caravan in great numbers, and rushed in upon the multitude in all directions, and carried off many women and much spoil. And Arjuna found that all his strength had departed from him, and that he could not bend his bow nor draw his sword; and he prayed to God and regained a portion of his strength, and slew many of the robbers, but he could only save a few of the women and a small portion of the treasure.

Caravan with Arjuna attacked and despoiled by robbers.

Arjuna then proceeded with the remnant of the people and goods, and conducted them in safety to the plain of Kurukshetra, where five of Krishna's widows burnt themselves on the funeral pile, whilst the remaining widows put on the dress of devotees and retired to the jungle. Arjuna then proceeded to Indra-prastha, and settled the remnant of the people there.

Five of Krishna's widows burn themselves.

The foregoing narrative of the destruction of Dwáraká is evidently a mythical account of one of those great convulsions of nature which occur at

Review of the foregoing narrative of the destruction of Dwáraká.

wide intervals in tropical climes. It seems to have been preceded by a feast, at which a quarrel arose which led to a dreadful scene of bloodshed; and although many of the details are mythical, yet as they seem to refer to some actual event, a brief review of the salient points may not be without value.

Story of the three Rishis purely mythical.

The story of the three Rishis, and the prank played upon them by the young men of Dwáraká, is evidently fabulous; and it is not difficult to apprehend the reason for its insertion. The catastrophe at Prabhása, and the destruction of the city of Dwáraká, were disasters of so marked a character as to give rise to the idea that they were inflicted by an offended deity; and hence the interpolation of a myth which referred them to the curse of three Bráhman Rishis.[2] The prohibition to drink wine, however, appears to have had some foundation in truth. Horrible spectres appeared in the streets and houses, such as are said to appear to drunkards when thrown into a state of delirium tremens by being suddenly deprived of strong drink. The quarrel at the festival at Prabhása also arose in the most natural manner, and illustrates in a remarkable degree the turbulence of the assemblies of Yádavas. But the great event was the destruction of Dwáraká; and nearly all the subsidiary details in which Arjuna is alluded to, may be regarded as mythical in-

Natural effects of the prohibition to drink wine.

[2] According to the story already narrated the Rishis pronounced a curse that Sámba should bring forth an iron club which should destroy the whole race of Yadu. Subsequently Sámba is said to have voided an iron bar, which Krishna ordered to be pulverized to atoms in order to prevent the fulfilment of the curse. The atoms, however, were scattered on the sands of the sea-shore, and from them a number of iron reeds grew up as sharp as swords. Accordingly, when the Chieftains quarrelled at the feast, they are said to have killed each other with these iron reeds; and in this manner the curse of the Rishis is said to have been fulfilled.

terpolations of the Brahmanical compilers intended to connect Arjuna with this extraordinary catastrophe. The statement that the sea rose to a great height, and overwhelmed the whole city, is not without a parallel in modern times; and indeed the terrible disasters which accompanied the cyclones of 1864 at Calcutta and Masulipatam will never be forgotten by the present generation in India.[3]

Nature of the inundation which overwhelmed Dwáraká.

The narrative of the exile and death of the Pándavas is evidently mythical, but calls for no remark, and may be permitted to tell its own story:—

3rd, The exile and death of the Pándavas.

After this Arjuna returned towards Hastinápur, and on his way he met with Vyása the sage; and Vyása told him that his prosperity was now at an end, and that his strength had gone from him, and he would no more be able to string his bow; and that his worldly reign was over, and he must now think only of the salvation of his soul. When Arjuna reached Hastinápur he told Raja Yudhishthira and his brethren all that had occurred, and of the advice which had been given to him by Vyása; and they were much grieved at the tidings brought by Arjuna, and determined one and all to follow the counsel which had been given by the sage.

Arjuna advised by Vyása to abandon worldly concerns.

Now after the death of Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, his widow Uttará gave birth to a son named Paríkshit; and Raja Yudhishthira, being resolved on retiring from the world, gave the Raj of Hastinápur to Paríkshit, the son of Abhimanyu, and the Raj of Indra-prastha to Yuyutsu, the only surviving son of Maháraja Dritaráshtra; and Yudhishthira particularly enjoined them to live in friendship and

Yudhishthira gives the Raj of Hastinápur to Paríkshit, and the Raj of Indra-prastha to Yuyutsu.

[3] By those who were residing in Calcutta, near the banks of the river, in 1864, the memory of the great cyclone of the 5th October will ever be remembered. A night of wind and rain was followed by a tempest which increased in fury until it blew a tremendous hurricane, which substantial buildings alone could withstand. In the midst of this tumult of the elements, the river suddenly arose and overflowed its banks to an extent which proved that had Calcutta been situated, like Dwáraká, near the sea-coast, the whole city must have been overwhelmed.

perfect amity with each other. Yudhishthira then took off his earrings and necklace, and all the jewels from his fingers and arms, and all his royal raiment; and he and his brethren, and their wife Draupadí, clothed themselves after the manner of devotees, in vestments made of the bark of trees. And the five brethren threw the fire of their domestic sacrifices and cookery into the Ganges, and went forth from the city following each other. First walked Yudhishthira, then Bhíma, then Arjuna, then Nakula, then Sahadeva, then Draupadí, and then a dog. And they went through the country of Banga towards the rising of the sun; and after passing through many lands they reached the Himálaya mountain, and there they died one after the other, and were transported to the heaven of Indra.

The five Pándavas and their wife Draupadí assume the garb of devotees.

Die on the Himálaya mountains.

Review of the foregoing narrative of the close of the history.

The foregoing narrative of the closing scenes in the history of the Pándavas is overlaid in the Mahá Bhárata with many puerile details of a Brahmanical character from which nothing of value can be inferred. They involve some exaggerated moral precepts and a fanciful description of a hell; and as these can only serve to illustrate the later religious conceptions of the Hindús they may be reserved for future discussion.

Mythical details.

Conclusion of the Mahá Bhárata.

Here, then, ends the great national poem of the Mahá Bhárata, the treasury of Hindú history and fable, invested by modern interpreters with a deep religious meaning, and converted, as it were, into a testament for enforcing the worship of Krishna as the incarnation of Vishnu. But the light in which this matchless Epic is regarded by the modern Hindús may perhaps be best illustrated by the following paragraph which concludes the poem; and which, however absurd it may be to the European, is unquestionably the living faith of the millions

who dwell in the Indian peninsula under British rule :—

Modern Hindú belief in the virtues of the Mahá Bhárata.

The reading of this Mahá Bhárata destroys all sin, and produces virtue; so much so, that the pronunciation of a single sloka is sufficient to wipe away all guilt. This Mahá Bhárata contains the history of the gods of the Rishis in heaven and those on earth, of the Gandharvas and the Rákshasas. It also contains the life and actions of the one God holy, immutable, and true, who is Krishna; who is the creator and the ruler of this universe; who is seeking the welfare of his creation by means of his incomparable and indestructible power; whose actions are celebrated by all the sages; who has bound human beings in a chain, of which one end is life and the other death; on whom the Rishis meditate, and a knowledge of whom imparts unalloyed happiness to their hearts; and for whose gratification and favour all the daily devotions are performed by all worshippers. If a man reads the Mahá Bhárata, and has faith in its doctrines, he becomes free from all sin, and ascends to heaven after his death. If a man reads even the summary in the opening chapter of the Mahá Bhárata every morning and evening, he is absolved from all the sins that he commits during the day. As butter is to all other food; as Bráhmans are to all other men; as the Arunika chapter, which points out the way of salvation, is to all the four Vedas; as amrita is to all other medicines; as the ocean is to a pool of water; and as the cow is to all other quadrupeds;—so is the Mahá Bhárata to all other histories. He who on days of festival merely reads a small portion of the Mahá Bhárata, obtains the same advantages as is derived from reading the whole. He who attentively listens to the slokas of the Mahá Bhárata, and has faith in them, enjoys a long life and solid reputation in this world, and an eternal abode in the heavens in the next.

Reason for its being called the Mahá Bhárata.

It is called Mahá Bhárata, because once upon a time the gods placed the Mahá Bhárata on one scale, and the Vedas on the other; and because the Mahá Bhárata weighed

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heavier, it was called by that name, which signifies the greatest in weight.[4]

[4] This mythical estimate of the comparative value of the Mahá Bhárata and the Vedas is of some importance; inasmuch as it indicates an attempt to exhibit the Brahmanical doctrines involved in the Mahá Bhárata as overriding the earlier religious belief which appears in the Vedas.

END OF THE MAHÁ BHÁRATA.

PART III.

EPISODES IN THE MAHÁ BHÁRATA.

CHAPTER I.

LEGENDS OF KRISHNA.

General character of the episodes in the Mahá Bhárata.

THE episodes in the Mahá Bhárata are very numerous, and, indeed, form the bulk of the poem, but very few appear to possess any real historical value. They chiefly consist of mythical fables intended to exalt the pretensions of the Bráhmans, or to enforce the rules of Bráhmanism, or caste. Accordingly they generally refer to miracles performed by certain Brahmanical sages; to the rigour of their austerities; to their occasional adventures with celestial nymphs or other women, which led to the birth of heroes or heroines who were famous in tradition; to the mastery of the passions, which enabled certain ascetics to resist the most powerful female allurements; or, at the best, they are extravagant stories of the devotion of a wife or the obedience of a son or a pupil. Accordingly, by far the greater por-

tion are utterly devoid of historical significance, and may be passed over as unmeaning myths, belonging to an age long posterior to the Vedic period, and tacked on to the main tradition of the Mahá Bhárata for the purpose of imbuing the masses with Brahmanical ideas. There is, however, one group of legends, namely, those which refer to the life of Krishna, which cannot be passed over in silence. Many, as will already have been seen, are interwoven with the story of the great war; but in addition to those already indicated, there are a series relating to the birth and adventures of Krishna before his pretended connection with the Pándavas, which are of twofold significance; first, as authentic traditions of the tribe of cowherds, known as Yádavas, who succeeded in establishing a Raj in the peninsula of Guzerat; and, secondly, as religious myths intended to represent Krishna, the hero of the Yádavas, as an incarnation of the Supreme Being known as Vishnu. In addition to these Krishna legends there are three stories which are valuable both on account of their intrinsic merits, and as belonging to three different epochs in Hindú history. The latter, however, will be treated hereafter. For the present the attention may be confined to the life of Krishna.

Absence of historical value.

Importance of the legends referring to Krishna.

Their significance, historical and religious.

Three other important legends beside those connected with Krishna.

The historical character of Krishna as a hero may be briefly indicated. He appears to have belonged to a tribe well known in Hindú history as that of the Yádavas, or descendants of Yadu. These Yádavas were a nomade race, who grazed cattle and made butter, and occasionally migrated to different places accompanied by their cows and waggons. The time and circumstances under which

Historical character of Krishna as a hero.

The Yádavas.

they first entered Hindústan are alike unknown. At the birth of Krishna they appear to have settled in the neighbourhood of the city of Mathurá, the modern Muttra, on the banks of the river Jumná, and about a hundred and twenty miles to the south of the site of the ancient city of Hastinápur. Had such been their geographical position in the time of the great war of Bhârata there would have been less reason to doubt the connection of Krishna with the Pándavas; although as cowherds they were regarded with great contempt by the Kshatriyas, and were supposed to belong to the inferior caste of Vaisyas. But at the time when Krishna is said to have first come into contact with the Pándavas, he and his tribe had already migrated to Dwáraká, on the western coast of the peninsula of Guzerat, which is at least seven hundred miles from Hastinápur as the crow flies. Accordingly, it seems impossible that such relations as those said to have subsisted between Krishna and the Pándavas could really have existed; and this suspicion is confirmed by the mythical character of every event which apparently connects the Yádava Chieftains of Dwáraká with the royal house at Hastinápur.[1]

Their encampment in the neighbourhood of Mathurá.

Migration of the Yádavas from Mathurá to Dwáraká.

Improbability of intimate relations between the Yádavas of Dwáraká and the Pándavas of Hastinápur.

The personal character of Krishna will be found clearly indicated in the legends. He was originally

Personal character of Krishna.

[1] The Rajas of Vijaya-nagur, who in the fifteenth century of the Christian era maintained a supremacy over the whole of the country south of the Krishna river, and thus possessed the last great Hindú empire which was established in India, claimed to be descendants of the Yádava tribe; and it is a curious fact that it was from one of the decayed Chieftains of this fallen dynasty that the East India Company obtained in the first half of the seventeenth century the grant of land on the coast of Coromandel, on which stands the modern city of Madras. The original grant engraved on a gold plate appears to have been preserved for more than a century; but was finally lost in 1746, when Madras was captured by the French under Labourdonnais.

A cowherd famous for his pranks and amours.

a mere cowherd, stealing butter and performing other similar pranks when a boy, and rendering himself famous for his amours when he attained the years of manhood. About this time Krishna and his companions left their encampment at a rural village named Vrindávana, and paid a visit to the city of Mathurá, where they appear to have conducted themselves like boors and cowherds as they were. The time however appears to have been a critical one. Kansa, the Raja of Mathurá, was a usurper, and seems to have been unpopular with his subjects; and a tumult arose during a festival in which he was slain by Krishna. Henceforth Krishna is represented as a hero, and efforts were made to ennoble his birth by representing him to have been in reality the son of a chieftain of the tribe. How far these efforts were mythical may be gathered from the legends themselves.

Takes a part in a popular movement against Raja Kansa and slays the tyrant.

Subsequent efforts to ennoble the birth of Krishna.

Religious character of Krishna.

Implied opposition of Krishna both to Siva and Indra.

The religious character of Krishna will be discussed hereafter. It will be sufficient to remark that he appears to have been opposed alike to the worship of Siva and the worship of Indra. The first opposition appears natural enough, for as Krishna was represented as an incarnation of Vishńu, he was of course opposed to the god Siva; the worshippers of Vishnu and those of Siva being in strong antagonism for many centuries. But the opposition to Indra is remarkable, because Krishna induced the Yádavas to worship the mountain Govarddhana in the place of Indra; an incident which would imply a conflict between a low Fetische worship and the worship of the Vedic deities. It will however be seen hereafter that Krishna was associated not only with Fetichism, but also with Buddhism; a circumstance

Connection of Krishna with Fetische worship and Buddhism.

which would account for his opposition both to the worship of the Vedic deities, and to that of the Linga which is emblematical of the god Siva.[2]

Seven legends connected with the early life of Krishna.

The principal legends connected with the early life of Krishna appear to be seven in number, viz.—

1st, Birth of Krishna.

2nd, Infancy and boyhood of Krishna.

3rd, Krishna's opposition to the worship of Indra.

4th, Love adventures of Krishna.

5th, Krishna's adventures in Mathurá.

6th, Krishna's contest with Raja Kansa.

7th, Krishna's life at Dwáraká in Guzerat.

These legends of Krishna may be related in their order as follows:[3]

1. *Birth of Krishna.*

Yádava tribe dwelling at Vrindávana and Gokula.

In days of old the children of Yadu dwelt on both sides of the river Jumná, that is, in the village of Vrindávana on the western bank of the river, and in the country of Gokula on the opposite shore. And the Chiefs of that tribe were Sura and his son Vasudeva.

Sura and Vasudeva.

Ugrasena, Raja of Mathurá, deposed by his son Kansa.

In those days Raja Kansa ruled the Bhojas who dwelt in the city of Mathurá which is nigh unto Vrindávana.[4] And Raja Kansa was a wicked Raja. He had deposed his father Ugrasena and reigned in his stead; for Kansa worshipped

Persecution of the worshippers of Vishnu by the worshippers of Siva.

[2] The historical and religious aspect of this question will be discussed in a future volume. It will be sufficient to remark in the present place that the religious wars between the Buddhists and the Linga worshippers of the Dekhan is one of the most important events in Hindú history.

[3] The legends in connection with the life of Krishna are to be found in the Khila-Harivansa-Parva, which is comparatively a modern supplement to the Mahá Bhárata. They are also to be found in the Bhágavat-purána, and its Hindú paraphrase, the Prem Ságur. The narrative in the text has been drawn up from Mr Eastwick's translation of the Prem Ságur, compared with the abridgment in the fifth book of the Vishnu-purána, p. 491, Wilson's *translation*.

[4] The Bhojas are said to have been a branch of the Yádavas, but the relationship is very obscure.

Siva, and Ugrasena worshipped Vishnu; and Ugrasena would not pray to the god Siva when his son Kansa requested him.

Marriage of Devaki to Vasudeva.

Now Devaka, who was the brother of Ugrasena, had a daughter named Devakí. And Devaka said to his nephew Kansa:—"O Raja, unto whom shall I give my daughter Devakí in marriage?" And Kansa replied:—"Give her in marriage to Vasudeva, the son of Sura, Chief of the Yádavas." So the marriage was agreed upon, and when the day had arrived for the nuptial ceremony, Sura, and his son Vasudeva, and all their kinsmen and friends, proceeded from the village of Vrindávana to the city of Mathurá, and the marriage rites of Vasudeva and Devakí were performed according to the ordinance.

Kansa threatens to slay Devaki on her wedding day.

When the marriage ceremony was over, the bridegroom and the bride ascended a chariot, and Raja Kansa drove the chariot with his own hand in the marriage procession. At that moment there came a voice from heaven, saying:—"O Kansa, the son of Devakí will be your destroyer." Then Kansa was in a great fear, and seized Devakí by her hair and dragged her from the chariot, and drew his sword to slay her. And Vasudeva trembled greatly, and besought Kansa to spare his hand; and he said to Kansa:—"No son of mine shall ever do you hurt, for I will deliver into your hands every infant that is born of Devakí." So Kansa listened to the words of Vasudeva and spared the life of Devakí.

Vasudeva engages to deliver up his children by Devaki to Raja Kansa.

Birth of Balaráma, who is brought up in Gokula as the son of Rohiní.

After many days Devakí conceived and bore a son who was named Balaráma, but the babe was carried away to the country of Gokula, which is on the other side of the river Jumná, and brought up as the child of Rohiní, who was another wife of Vasudeva. And Devakí conceived again, and

Conception of Krishna.

Kansa's efforts to secure the infant.

Kansa heard of it; and he bound Vasudeva and Devakí with gyves and manacles, and he fastened the doors of their dwelling with locks and bars; and he ordered his mightiest warriors to keep constant guard round about the place, with elephants, lions, and dogs. And on a certain night the child

Krishna was born, and all the marks of Vishnu were seen upon him; and immediately after his birth the gyves and manacles fell from the hands of Vasudeva and Devakí, and the doors opened of their own accord, and the guards were all thrown into a deep slumber. So Vasudeva placed the babe in a basket which was used for winnowing corn, and set it upon his head, and went to cross the river Jumná to carry the babe to the country of Gokula. Now when Vasudeva entered the river, the waters of the Jumná were very deep, and rose up to his nostrils so that he was sore afraid; and the child Krishna stretched forth his foot and the waters were stayed, and became shallow and fordable. At the same time the rain began to fall; but the many-headed serpent, Sesha-naga, followed Vasudeva, and spread out his hoods so as to cover the divine babe. So Vasudeva crossed the river with the child, and carried it to the house of Nanda, who was a cowherd; and behold on that night Yasodá, who was the wife of Nanda, had given birth to a daughter. And Vasudeva changed the infants, and Yasodá and Nanda knew it not; and Krishna was brought up in the house of Nanda, as his own son; whilst Vasudeva returned across the river, and gave the infant daughter of Yasodá to his wife Devakí. At that moment the doors became locked as before, and Vasudeva and Devakí put on the gyves and manacles; and the infant cried aloud and awoke all the guards. And Kansa heard that the child was born, and he rushed on the spot and seized the babe to slay it; but the infant escaped from his hands, and ascended to heaven, crying:—"O Kansa, thy foe has already been born, and now thou canst not escape alive." Then Kansa was filled with wrath, and ordered that all the worshippers of Vishnu, young and old, should be slain; and he commanded his warriors to make search for all young children throughout that country, and to slay every male child that possessed strength and vigour. And Nanda and the cowherds at Gokula heard that Kansa was slaying the infants, and they were in great fear; and they loaded their carts with milk, butter, and curds, and they took with

Birth of Krishna.

Vasudeva carries the babe across the Jumná in a basket.

Miraculous lowering of the waters.

The great snake Sesha-nága protects the infant Krishna.

Krishna changed for the infant daughter of Nanda and Yasodá.

Kansa seizes the supposed daughter of Devaki, who escapes to heaven.

Slaughter of the worshippers of Vishnu and the male children.

Nanda and the cowherd pay tribute to Raja Kansa.

them silver money, and carried them all to Mathurá as tribute to Raja Kansa.[5]

Demons sent by Kansa to slay Krishna.

After this Kansa sent many wicked demons in various forms to slay the infant Krishna. The first assumed the shape of a beautiful woman with a poisoned nipple; and when she offered her breast to Krishna he seized it and sucked away her life. Next a demon got into a cart whilst Krishna was sleeping beneath it; but the infant kicked against the cart, and broke it into a thousand pieces, and thus slew the demon. A third came in the form of a whirlwind, but Krishna dashed him against a stone and he fell down dead.

2. *Infancy and boyhood of Krishna.*

Infancy of Krishna and Balaráma.

When Krishna and his elder brother Balaráma began to grow, they rejoiced the hearts of their mothers, Yasodá and Rohiní. And they were dressed in frocks of blue and yellow, and their hair was trimmed like the wings of a crow;[6] and wooden ornaments were hung from their necks, and they had playthings in their hands. After a while they began to crawl about the courtyard upon their knees, and to stumble and fall, and prattle lispingly. And their mothers Yasodá and Rohiní followed close behind them lest they should be frightened and fall down; and sometimes when they fell they took hold of the tails of the calves and heifers and pulled themselves up again.

Childish gambols of Krishna and Balaráma.

Yasodá about to whip Krishna, when she sees the three worlds in his mouth.

One day Yasodá was very angry with Krishna, because he would eat dirt, and she took a stick to beat him; but when she came to him he opened his mouth, and she looked in and saw the three worlds; and she marvelled greatly for a while, and then remembered it no more.

Churning day in the house of Nanda and Yasodá.

One morning after this, Yasodá and all the cowherdesses

[5] The account of Raja Kansa is supposed by many to have been borrowed from the Gospel account of King Herod. Whether this be the case or not, it is certain that most of the details are mythical, and inserted for the purpose of ennobling the birth of Krishna.

[6] This simile implies that the top of the head was shaved, whilst the black hair was left on each side of the head. Many Hindú children are shaved in this manner, though some have the whole head shaved, sides and all.

arose very early to churn; and they swept and cleansed the house, and plastered it with fresh cow-dung, and each took her own churn and sat down to make butter. Meantime the noise awakened Krishna, and he began crying for his food, but no one heeded him. Then the lad was filled with wrath, and took the staff out of his mother's churn, and began to kick and cry; and Yasodá took him on her lap, and coaxed him, and gave him some milk and bread and butter. Whilst Krishna was eating, a cowherdess ran in and cried out that the milk was boiling over; and Yasodá set the lad down upon the ground, and ran off to save the milk. Meanwhile Krishna broke the vessels of curds and butter-milk, and began to eat the butter, and give it to the other boys who were there. When Yasodá returned she was very wroth, and tied Krishna to the churn, but he ran away with it until it was caught between two trees; and he tore down the two trees, and when the people came up to see what he had done, they found him laughing between the trees and sitting upon the churn.

Petulance of Krishna at not getting his breakfast.

Krishna's pranks with his mother's churn.

Pulls down two trees.

After this the Yádavas moved away from Gokula, and set off with their waggons and cattle for the village of Vrindávana; and here Krishna and Balaráma lived like two cow-boys along with the cows and cowherds. And when Krishna was a lad he began to play his pranks; and he went out and stole the butter and curds which the cowherdesses had made; and when they told his mother, he said that they did not tell the truth; and the women gazed upon his face and smiled, and went their way. And demons came to slay Krishna, and one came in the shape of a cow, and another in the shape of a crane, and another as a great serpent; but he fought and killed them all.[7]

The Yádavas of Gokula migrate to Vrindávana.

Krishna steals butter.

Kills many demons.

And it came to pass that the Raja of the Rain saw that the Hot Season was parching up the country of Vrindávana; and he took compassion upon the beasts and birds and living creatures, and assembled all his warlike clouds from

War between the Raja of the Rain and the Hot Season.

[7] Krishna's triumph over the great serpent Káliya was at one time supposed to be borrowed from the triumph of Christ over Satan. There appears however to be no allusion whatever to the bruising of the Serpent's head in the sense in which it is understood by Christian commentators.

every quarter, and went forth to battle against the Hot Season. Then the clouds thundered like kettledrums, and flew through the air like mighty heroes; whilst the lightning flashed like the glittering of swords and spears; and the long rows of cranes fluttered their white wings like the waving of many banners, and the frogs and peacocks raised their voices like bards chaunting the praises of great Rajas; and the heavy drops of rain fell like a shower of arrows.

Assembling of the clouds in battle-array.

Now when the Hot Season saw his enemy advancing in such gallant array, he fled with all haste from the thirsty plains.

Flight of the Hot Season.

And the Rain refreshed the Earth, as a husband refreshes his spouse after a separation of many days; and the Earth opened her bosom to her lord, and brought forth fruits and flowers to pay obeisance to their father. And the country of Vrindávana appeared like a beautiful woman adorned with all her jewels; and the lakes and rivers were filled with water; and the trees waved their branches to and fro, whilst the cuckoos, and the pigeons, and the parrots poured forth their joyous strains. And all the cowherds and cowherdesses of Vrindávana gave themselves up to mirth and play; and they put on red and yellow garments, and began to swing in swings, and to sing with loud voices their hymns of welcome to the Rains.

Joy of the Earth.

Festivities of the cowherds and cowherdesses.

At this time Krishna and his companions went out to the pastures with the cows, and sported about in the jungle. And Krishna played upon his flute, and all the young damsels of Vrindávana heard him, and said one to the other:—"Krishna is now playing and dancing amongst the cows, but at evening time he will return hither and we shall behold him." And one day the damsels went down to the river Jumná to bathe; and Krishna saw them, and carried away their clothes, and climbed up a tree; and he made each damsel come out of the water and receive her clothes at his hands. And Krishna said:—"Take not amiss the lesson I have given you; for the god Varuna dwells in the water, and no one should bathe in it without clothes."[s]

Krishna plays the flute in the pastures.

Confusion of the damsels of Vrindávana.

Krishna hides the clothes of the damsels who are bathing in the Jumná.

[s] This implied lesson seems to be an after-thought of the author, to impart a religious significance to the dubious prank played by the incarnation of Vishnu.

3. *Krishna's opposition to the worship of Indra.*

Great feast at Vrindávana in honour of Indra.

Now the custom was for the people of Vrindávana to hold a great feast on the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month Kártika; and on that day they bathed, and washed their clothes, and filled a square place with saffron and sandal wood, and offered sweetmeats to Indra, together with cakes, fried in butter and oil, and incense and lamps. When Krishna saw what was going on, he said to his father:—

Krishna counsels the Yádavas to transfer their worship from Indra to the Govarddhana mountain.

"Why worship Indra as the Supreme God? He cannot grant prosperity, for that is acquired by our religious merits, and when he is defeated by the Asuras, he flies away and hides himself: O father, we are Vaisyas, and our cattle live upon the pastures: Let us, therefore, cease to worship Indra, and pay our devotions to the mountain Govarddhana."

The Yádavas worship the mountain.

So Nanda and the cowherds obeyed the words of Krishna, and they placed the sweetmeats, and the fried cakes, and other things they had prepared, in large baskets, and brazen dishes and pots, and carried them in carts to the mountain Govarddhana, whilst a band of musicians accompanied them and played all the way. When they reached the place, they swept and cleaned the ground all round the mountain, and sprinkled water, and arranged the cakes and sweetmeats in order, and spread garlands upon the mountain. Then Nanda and all the cowherds summoned the family priest and prayed to the mountain. Then Krishna assumed a second form as the genius of the mountain, and manifested himself to all the people; and Krishna in his first form as a cowherd bowed reverentially to the mountain, and all the cowherds and cowherdesses did the same, saying:—"When did Indra ever manifest himself as Govarddhana has done?" And the cowherds and cowherdesses presented the cakes and sweetmeats to the mountain; and Krishna in the form of the genius of the mountain stretched forth his arms and began to eat the food. Then Krishna in his own form, and all the people who were there, walked in adoration round the mountain, and returned merrily to Vrindávana. And all the cowherds and cowherdesses rejoiced greatly, and they painted marks on

Krishna appears in a second form as the genius of the mountain.

Offering of cakes and sweetmeats to the mountain.

Sports of the cowherds.

all the cows and calves, and fastened small bells and tinkling ornaments round their necks, and engaged in every kind of sport and pastime.

Wrath of Indra. He sends down rain to wash away the country of Vrindávana.

When, however, Indra saw that the Yádavas had forsaken his worship and made their offerings to the mountain, he was very wroth, and commanded the Raja of the clouds to go with all his host, and pour down such a deluge as should wash away the mountain and all the country of Vrindávana. So the Raja of the clouds obeyed the commands of Indra, and all the people of Vrindávana came to Krishna trembling with fear; but Krishna cried out:—"Fear not! The mountain himself shall protect you." Then Krishna by his divine power made the mountain fiery hot; and he raised it up with the little finger of his left hand, so that it covered all the people like an umbrella. And it was told to Indra that all the rains poured down by the Raja of the clouds fell upon the mountain with a hiss; and he went himself and rained without ceasing for seven days and nights, but not a drop fell upon the people of Vrindávana. So Indra returned to his abode in Swarga, and Krishna set down the mountain in its proper place as it had been before; after which Indra and all the gods came to Krishna and did homage before him as the God of gods and Lord of all.

Krishna renders the mountain fiery hot, and raises it over the people like an umbrella.

Indra worships Krishna as the Supreme Lord.

4. *Love Adventures of Krishna.*

Krishna dances with all the women of Vrindávana on the night of the full moon.

After this, on the night of the full moon in the month Kártika, Krishna went out into the jungle and played upon the flute; and all the women of Vrindávana heard the sweet notes of the flute, and were filled with love for Krishna, and followed him into the jungle. And Krishna led the women to the bank of the Jumná, and they all danced and sang round him in a ring, until he appeared like the moon surrounded by a circle of stars. Presently Krishna disappeared from amongst them, for he had a beautiful mistress named Radhika; and he went away to wander with his favourite damsel beneath the light of the full moon. And all the other women sorrowed greatly, and sought for Krishna in all directions, but they found him not. And presently they

Disappears with his favourite Rhadhika.

Sorrow of the women.

saw a mirror upon a bed of leaves, and one said to the other:—"When Krishna sat down to wreathe the long back hair of Radhika, she could not see his face; and she held up the mirror and saw his divine countenance whilst he beheld the face of his beloved." Meantime Krishna was walking with Radhika, but her soul was elated with pride, and she thought herself better than Krishna, and she said to him:—"O my beloved, I am weary, and I pray you to carry me upon your shoulders." And Krishna sat down and smiled, and beckoned her to mount; but when she stretched forth her hand, he vanished from her sight, and she remained alone with outstretched hand. And Radhika wept very bitterly, and the other women saw her, and approached her, and led her back to the bank of the Jumná.

Finding of the mirror.

Sinful elation of Radhika.

Krishna abandons Radhika.

The women find Radhika, and return with her to the Jumná.

Whilst the women were sitting by the river, mourning the absence of their beloved Krishna, he suddenly appeared amongst them, and their sorrow was turned into great joy. And Krishna multiplied himself into many forms, so that each cowherdess thought that she had Krishna to herself; and the women joined hands two and two, and between each two was a Krishna; and the Krishnas and the damsels danced together in the circular dance, until their necklaces of jewels were snapped asunder, and their wreaths of flowers had fallen to the ground, and the drops of perspiration glistened on their brows like rows of pearls, and their raven tresses hung down upon their fair faces like young snakes clinging for nectar to the full moon. And the Krishnas and the cowherdesses gratified every desire of their hearts; and they all went down into the river Jumná, and sported and gambolled in the waters; and the moon, surrounded by the stars, was fascinated with the sight, and sent down nectar with its beams.

Krishna returns to the women.

Multiplies himself into as many Krishnas as there are women.

The circular dance.

Sporting in the river Jumná.

5. *Krishna's Adventures in Mathurá.*

Now it so happened that Raja Kansa performed a great sacrifice to the god Siva in the city of Mathurá, and many fighting men and wrestlers went to the city to exhibit their skill before the Raja. And Krishna and his brother

Raja Kansa performs a sacrifice to the god Siva in the city of Mathurá.

Krishna and Balaráma go to the city of Mathurá.

Balaráma went to Mathurá with the other cowherds; and all the women of Vrindávana sorrowed at the departure of Krishna. Now when they entered the city their clothes were very old and dirty, and they saw the washerman of the Raja laden with bundles of washed clothes; and they

Adventure with the washerman of the Raja.

prayed the washerman to lend them new clothes, but the man would not. Then Krishna and the other cowherds fell upon the washerman and belaboured him, and Krishna struck him so that his head flew off like an ear of corn.

Amusing mistakes in putting on the clean clothes.

So Krishna and his companions seized the garments that the washerman had washed, and began to put them on; but they were rude cowherds, and understood not the raiment, and some thrust their arms into the drawers whilst others drew the jackets on to their legs. And Krishna laughed as he beheld his companions, but presently a tailor came up, and Krishna requested him to dress the cowherds; and the tailor obeyed the request, and set to work with all

Krishna forgives the sins of the tailor.

speed and fitted the clothes upon the cowherds, and Krishna rewarded him by forgiving him all his sins.[9]

Pious address of Kubja to Krishna.

After this a woman who was humpbacked appeared before Krishna, and her name was Kubja. And she said:—"I am the handmaid of Raja Kansa, and my duty is to anoint him with saffron and sandal; and I pray you to permit me to do the same for you." So Krishna gave her leave, and

Krishna straightens the humpback and renders her young and beautiful.

she did so. Then Krishna took compassion upon the humpbacked woman, and he placed his feet upon her feet, and his two fingers beneath her chin, and raised her up, so that she became quite straight, and by the touch of Krishna she was

Kubja offers herself to Krishna and is accepted.

rendered young and beautiful. And Kubja seeing that she was now very beautiful, prayed Krishna to come to her house; and Krishna took her by the hand and said:—"I will come and meet you when I have slain Raja Kansa." So Kubja went to her own house, and filled a square place with saffron and sandal, and rejoiced greatly in the hope of receiving Krishna.[10]

[9] The grounds upon which Krishna seems to have forgiven the sins of the tailor seem to form a travestie of Christianity.

[10] The similarity between this story and two events recorded in the Gospel nar-

Meanwhile Krishna and his companions approached the gate which was called the gate of the bow; and here was placed the great bow of Siva, which was as long as three palm trees, and so heavy that no man could lift it. And the warders of the gate, seeing the cowherds approaching, cried out to them to keep their distance, for that this was a royal gate, and no man could go through it excepting the Raja. But Krishna and those who were with him pretended not to hear the warders, and went straight to the place where the bow of Siva was lying. And Krishna took up the bow and broke it as an elephant breaks a sugar cane; and the air was filled with the mighty sound of the breaking of the bow. Then the warders rushed upon the cowherds, but Krishna withstood them with great power and slew them all. And the people who looked on said one to the other:—"Surely these two men will slay Raja Kansa." Meantime the Raja himself heard the mighty sound, and demanded of his servants the reason thereof; and they uncovered their heads and said:—"Two men of the Yádava tribe, named Krishna and Balaráma, have entered the city of Mathurá and made a great uproar, for they have broken the mighty bow of Siva, and slain all the warders." At these words Kansa summoned many fighting men, and ordered them to go and put the two cowherds to death; but Krishna and Balaráma fell upon the fighting men and slew them as they had already slain the warders. Then the two brothers returned to the place where the Yádavas had pitched their tents, and Krishna showed to his father Nanda the clothes that he had taken from the washerman of Raja Kansa. And Nanda said:—"O Krishna, will you never cease your pranks?

Krishna breaks the bow of Siva.

Krishna slays the warders of the bow.

Raja Kansa orders the death of Krishna and Balaráma.

Krishna and Balaráma slaughter the fighting men of Kansa.

Krishna warned by Nanda.

rative, is too striking to be passed over without notice. The healing of the woman who had been bowed down for eighteen years, and who was made straight by Christ on the Sabbath day, and the incident of the woman who broke an alabaster box of spikenard, and poured it upon his head, seem to have been thrown together in the legend of Kubja. (Comp. Luke xiii. 2; and Mark xiv. 3.) The compilers of the life of Krishna appear however to have been compelled to garble the incidents in order to bring them into conformity with the amorous character of the Yádava hero. It is subsequently related with some grossness of detail, which has been omitted from the present text, that Krishna ultimately visited Kubja and gratified all her desires.

Remember that this is not the forest of Gokula, or the village of Vrindávana, but the city of Raja Kansa; therefore keep my counsel in mind, and work not any mischief here."

6. *Krishna's contest with Kansa, Raja of Mathurá.*

Restlessness of Kansa.

Now on that night Raja Kansa was filled with anguish, and he had no rest whether he rose up or whether he sat down, but he told no man of his deep anxiety. After a while he lay down upon his bed, but for the space of three watches he could not sleep. Then he fell into a short slumber, and he saw in a dream the phantom of his own body moving about without a head; and the phantom appeared to be bathing naked in the sand; and it swallowed poison and rode along upon an ass; and it dwelt with goblins in a cemetery, wearing a garland of blood-red flowers; and flaming trees were all around it with young children sitting thereon. And Kansa rose up from his bed in great terror, and sent for all his ministers and said:—"Let the great arena be swept and sprinkled with water, and summon thither all the Chieftains and people of the Yádavas, and all the Rajas who have come from afar, and after a while I myself will go into the arena." Then the ministers caused the arena to be swept and sprinkled, and they threw a canopy over it, and spread it with silken cloths, and they hung it with flags and garlands and strings of flowers, and ordered the musicians to play aloud and summon all men into the arena. And a vast multitude came and took the seats which were allotted them; and Raja Kansa came filled with pride, and sat himself upon a raised throne; and the gods seated in their cars began to look down from the sky.

Portentous dreams of Kansa.

Kansa orders his Ministers to prepare an arena for the exhibition of wrestlers.

Assembly of the Raja and the people.

Krishna and Balaráma approach the arena disguised as jugglers.

And at the dawning of the morning, Nanda and all the chief cowherds entered the assembly, and Krishna and Balaráma and the other young cowherds followed them disguised as jugglers. When Krishna and Balaráma arrived at the gate of the arena, they saw the furious elephant that belonged to Raja Kansa; and that elephant had the strength of ten thousand elephants, and stood at the gate swaying his

body to and fro. Then Balaráma called out to the keeper of the elephant:—"Take the elephant away and give us a passage to the Raja, or I will dash him down and destroy both him and you." At these words the keeper was in a rage, and urged on his elephant against the cowherds; but Balaráma swung round his fist and buffetted the elephant so that it drew up its trunk and fell backwards with a loud roar. And all the warriors of Raja Kansa were looking on, and the driver knew that he should be slain unless he conquered the striplings; and he plunged his goad into the elephant, and drove him against Balaráma and his brother Krishna. Then that elephant in its might and fury seized Krishna with its trunk, and threw him upon the ground, and would have gored him, but Krishna remained in safety between its tusks. Then Balaráma seized the elephant by the trunk and Krishna caught it by the tail; and they sported with the elephant, like children sporting with a calf. Then Krishna pulled the tail of the elephant, and swung him round and dashed him down, and buffetted him to death with his fists; and he tore away its tusks with his two hands so that the blood flowed forth like a river. And the driver shouted aloud in defiance, but Krishna slew him and cast him under the feet of the elephant; and Krishna and Balaráma carried a tusk in each hand, and entered the arena in great joy.

Adventures of Balaráma and Krishna with the great elephant of Raja Kansa.

Krishna kills the elephant and its driver.

Now when Krishna entered the assembly, the cowherds thought he was their companion, and the wrestlers thought he was a wrestler; but the damsels of the city thought that he was a miracle of comeliness, and the Rajas thought that he was a Raja, whilst the gods on high knew him to be their Supreme Lord. And Kansa cried out with a loud voice:—"O wrestlers, down with these two men and slay them, or else force them away from my presence." Then the wrestlers advanced and said to the two brothers:—"Our Raja is sad to-day, and desires to amuse himself with our wrestling: Be pleased, therefore, to wrestle with us and gratify the Raja." Krishna replied:—"We are but ignorant children; how then shall we encounter you? Nevertheless,

Different ideas of the people and the gods respecting Krishna.

Kansa orders the expulsion of Krishna and Balaráma.

The wrestlers challenge Krishna and Balaráma.

Krishna's reply.

as it is the will of the Raja, we will do as you say; but do not exert your force and dash us down, for we seek only to gratify the Raja." Then two mighty wrestlers came out and confronted Krishna and Balaráma; and they began to wrestle, head with head, arm with arm, eye with eye, leg with leg, pouncing, grappling, snatching, and tugging. And the people cried out:—"Shame upon the wrestlers for fighting such children." And whilst they were thus speaking Krishna and Balaráma hurled the two wrestlers backward and slew them upon the spot; and all the other wrestlers came up and were slain in like manner by Krishna and Balaráma.

Krishna and Balaráma slay the wrestlers.

Then all the people were filled with joy, and the musicians played aloud, and the gods showered down flowers from heaven; but Kansa cried out in a rage:—"Why is the music sounded, and why are the people rejoicing at the victory of Krishna? Seize the two young striplings, and bind them, and take them out of the assembly; and go and bring hither my father Ugrasena, and the treacherous Vasudeva and his wife Devakí: We will slay them first and then put to death the two brethren." At these words Krishna rose up clothed in mail, and a helmet was upon his head, and he held a shield in one hand and a double-edged sword in the other. And Raja Kansa stood up in great alarm, and began to tremble violently. And Krishna and Kansa fought desperately, and at last Krishna seized the Raja by the hair, and dashed him down and leaped upon him so that his life departed from his body. And the people cried out:—"Krishna has slain Kansa!" And gods, and men, and sages were filled with joy. And the gods rained down flowers and sounded the great kettledrum; and the hearts of all the men and women of Mathurá expanded on beholding the countenance of Krishna, as the lotus expands on beholding the full moon. And Krishna dragged the corpse of Raja Kansa to the river Jumná, and the Ránís of Kansa arose and took courage, and went to the banks of the Jumná and performed the obsequies of their lord.

Joy of the people and the gods.

Kansa orders the slaughter of Krishna and Balaráma, and the arrest of Ugrasena, Vasudeva, and Devaki.

Krishna rises up and fights Kansa.

Death of Kansa.

Rejoicings of the gods.

The Ránís perform the funeral rites for Kansa.

After this Krishna released Vasudeva and Devakí from

their bonds, and placed the old Raja Ugrasena upon the throne of Mathurá; and all the cowherds returned to Vrindávana, but Krishna and Balaráma remained in the city of Mathurá. And Krishna went to the house of Kubja, and gratified all her desires.

Krishna releases Vasudeva and Devaki, and restores Ugrasena to the throne.

Now the two Ránís of Raja Kansa were the daughters of Jarásandha, Raja of Magadhá; for when Kansa was very young he marched an army against Jarásandha and defeated him, and Jarásandha gave him his two daughters in marriage. And when Kansa was dead the two Ránís returned to the house of their father, and told him how Krishna and Balaráma had put their husband to death; and Jarásandha was filled with wrath and prepared to do battle against the Yádavas. And Jarásandha made war against Ugrasena, and Krishna defeated him seventeen times. Then Yama assembled an army of barbarians to aid Jarásandha, and they had thick necks and arms, large teeth, brown hair, and red eyes. And Jarásandha marched with an army of thirty millions of these unclean barbarians against Mathurá; and Ugrasena, and Krishna, and all the inhabitants of Mathurá and Vrindávana, migrated to the city of Dwáraká, which is in the country of Guzerat nigh unto the western sea.

Jarásandha, Raja of Magadhá, makes war against Mathurá, and is defeated by Krishna.

Marches an army of barbarians against Mathurá.

Krishna and the Yádavas retire to the city of Dwáraká.

7. *Krishna's life at Dwáraká.*

After this Balaráma took to wife Revatí, who was the daughter of Raja Raivata; and Krishna married Rukminí, the daughter of Bhíshmaka, Raja of Vidarbha. Now Rukminí was betrothed to Sisupála, but on the nuptial day she went with all her companions and maidens to worship in the temple of the goddess Durgá, when Krishna saw her and took her by the hand and carried her away in his chariot. And Rukmin, who was the brother of the damsel, and Sisupála, to whom she was betrothed, followed after Krishna, but he defeated them both, and brought away Rukminí to the city of Dwáraká, and married her according to the ordinance. And Rukminí bore a son to Krishna, and his name was Pradyumna.

Marriage of Balaráma with Revatí.

Krishna carries off Rukminí, the daughter of the Raja of Vidarbha.

Satrájit intrusts a precious gem to his brother Prasena, who is slain by a lion.

And there was a certain Chieftain of the Yádavas named

Satrájit, and he had a very precious gem; and one day he put the gem upon his neck and went into the assembly of the Yádavas. And the minds of all men were captivated by the sight of the gem, and Krishna asked Satrájit for it, but Satrájit went away and delivered it into the charge of his brother Prasena. And Prasena took the jewel, and went out into the forest to hunt, and a lion met him and slew him. And the lion took the gem in his mouth and departed with it, but was attacked and killed by Jámbavat, the Raja of the Bears; and Jámbavat kept possession of the gem.

Krishna suspected of stealing the gem, and recovers it from Jámbavat.

Meanwhile Satrájit suspected Krishna of having slain his brother Prasena for the sake of the gem; and this was told to Krishna, and he collected a number of Yádavas and went forth in search of Prasena, and followed the marks of his horse's hoofs until he came to the spot where he had been killed. And all the people saw that Prasena had been slain by a lion, and acquitted Krishna of having taken the gem. But Krishna followed the footsteps of the lion, and found that the lion had been killed by Jámbavat; and he fought against Jámbavat and subdued him, and Jámbavat presented him with the gem, and gave him his daughter Jámbavatí in marriage. After this Krishna returned to Dwáraká and gave the gem to Satrájit, who then knew that Krishna had not slain Prasena. And Satrájit gave Krishna his daughter Satyabhámá in marriage, and presented him with the gem as dowry, but Krishna desired him to keep the jewel.

Krishna marries Jámbavatí.

Marries Satyabhámá, the daughter of Satrájit.

Murder of Satrájit.

Now before Satyabhámá had been given to Krishna she had been sought in marriage by many Yádavas; and they were greatly enraged with Satrájit, and one of them killed Satrájit in his sleep and obtained possession of the gem.

Krishna revenges his death.

When Krishna heard what had been done he followed the man and slew him with his chakra; but the man had made over the gem to the charge of Akrúra, and it remained ever afterwards in the possession of Akrúra.

Krishna's love of women, and Balaráma's love of wine.

And Krishna married many wives and took many concubines, and all his life he was famous for his love of women;

and his elder brother Balaráma was in like manner ever famous for his love of wine.

Review of the foregoing legends respecting Krishna.

The foregoing legends respecting Krishna, so far as they refer to his historical character, appear to call for no particular remark. They sufficiently illustrate both the low origin of Krishna as a cowherd, and the disorder and violence which prevailed in the Yádava tribe. In the previous traditions which connect Krishna with the Pándavas, and which have already been indicated in the Mahá Bhárata, Krishna is represented in a higher and better character. His amorous temperament is but briefly noticed, and he stands prominently forward as an experienced warrior, witty in his conversation, ardent in his friendships, and a comforter to those who are in affliction. But in the present series Krishna is little better than a boor, with some sense of humour and decidedly mischievous propensities, and above all with a strong amorous temperament. The deification of such a hero as an incarnation of Vishnu forms a curious subject of inquiry; but the question is so closely intertwined with the history of the Hindú religion, that it must be reserved for a future volume.

Difference in the character of the separate traditions of the early life of Krishna, and of those which are interwoven with the story of the great war.

Question of his deification to be discussed hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

NALA AND DAMAYANTÍ.

Three Hindú traditions referring to three different epochs.

THE three Hindú traditions which will now be exhibited in an English dress, are not only exquisite pictures of ancient Hindú life, but seem to refer to three distinct epochs in the History of India. Their respective titles, and the age to which they appear to belong, may be indicated as follows :—

Nala and Damayantí—the Vedic period.
Devayání and Yayáti—the Brahmanic period.
Chandrahasna and Bikya—the modern period.

"Nala and Damayanti" to be referred to the Vedic period.

The first of these stories, namely, "Nala and Damayantí," is widely known to English readers through the metrical translation of Dr Milman.[1] The events seem to have occurred in the Vedic period, or that period which preceded Brahmanism; for although Bráhmans are introduced it is only to act as messengers, and the marriage rites of the happy pair are not performed by a Bráhman, but by the Raja who was the father of the bride. But it must have belonged to a late stage in the Vedic period, and at a date when the Aryans were already settled

Proofs that the story belongs to a late stage in the Vedic period.

[1] A free translation in blank verse by Mr Charles Bruce appeared in Fraser's Magazine for December, 1863, and January, 1864, and is perhaps even more popular than that of Dr Milman.

in Hindústan, for the hero was a Raja in Nishada or the Bhíl country, whilst the heroine was the daughter of a Raja of the Dekhan who reigned at Vidarbha, the modern Berar. Again, the evidences of civilization which are furnished by the story, combined with the geographical position of the leading actors, indicate a period long subsequent to the great war of Bhárata. It will also be remarked that the Vedic deities, who are represented as being present at the Swayamvara of Damayantí, seem to have lost their abstract nature, and appear as human beings, who pay great respect to a Bráhman sage, and are to some extent humbled by the hero of the tradition; whilst a considerable number of supernatural details have been introduced, either to disguise some usage in the original tradition which was condemned by a subsequent age, or as artificial embellishments which have been introduced in accordance with a meretricious taste which appears to have prevailed in the later era of Sanskrit literature. Indeed a wide interval appears to separate the age in which the main events of the story actually took place, from the age in which the poem itself was composed; and thus while the tradition belongs to a period when the Vedic deities were still worshipped, and the rites of marriage were performed by Rajas, the poem must have been thrown into its present form in a far later age of Brahmanism, when the worship of the Vedic deities had fallen into decay, and the Brahmanical sages were held to be equal if not superior to the gods.

Advance of the Aryans into the Dekhan.

Degeneration of the Vedic deities.

Supernatural details.

Wide interval between the age when the events occurred and the age when the poem was composed.

The leading incidents in the story of Nala and Damayantí may be thus indicated:—

Main incidents of the story.

1st, The Loves of Nala and Damayantí.

2nd, The Swayamvara of Damayantí.
3rd, The Gambling Match between Nala and Pushkara.
4th, The Exile of Nala and Damayantí.
5th, Nala's desertion of Damayantí.
6th, Adventures of Nala.
7th, Discovery of Damayantí.
8th, Discovery of Nala.
9th, Nala's Drive from Ayodhyá to Vidarbha.
10th, Damayantí recovers her husband.
11th, Nala recovers his Raj.

Story of Nala and Damayantí.

The story of Nala and Damayantí may now be related as follows:—

1. *The Loves of Nala and Damayantí.*

Nala, Raja of Nishadha or the Bhil country.

In ancient times there lived in Nishadha a certain Raja named Nala, and he was handsome, brave, majestic, and splendid, gifted with the choicest virtues, renowned for his skill in archery and in taming horses, of unblemished truth, admired by noble women, but loving dice exceedingly; and he was also deeply read in the Vedas, and had brought every sense and passion under control. Farther south, in the city of Vidarbha, reigned Raja Bhíma, terrible in strength, whose blooming and slender-waisted daughter Damayantí was famous amongst all the Rajas for her radiant charms and exceeding grace. And Nala, the tiger amongst Rajas, had so often heard of the exquisite loveliness of Damayantí, the pearl of maidens, that he was enamoured without having seen her; and the soul-disturbing Damayantí had, in like manner, so often been told of the godlike comeliness and virtues of the hero Nala, that she secretly desired to become his bride.

Damayantí, the beautiful daughter of Bhíma, Raja of Vidarbha or Berar, in the Dekhan.

Mutual love of Nala and Damayantí.

The swan with golden wings promises to induce Damayantí to think of no one but Nala.

Now on a certain day Raja Nala wandered to a grove and pondered on his deep love for Damayantí, when a flock of swans with golden plumage flew into the grove; and he caught one of the bright birds. And the bird cried out:—

"Slay me not, O gentle Raja, and I will so praise thee in the presence of Damayantí, that she shall think of no other man but thee." So Nala set it free, and the bird of golden wing flew away with all its companions to the city of Vidarbha, and entered the garden of Raja Bhíma. And the beautiful Damayantí was sporting with her maidens in the garden, when they all beheld a flock of swans who dropped their golden plumes; and the slender-waisted damsels chased the bright birds about the garden, when suddenly a swan turned round to Damayantí, and said in the language of men:—"O Damayantí, thou art the loveliest of maidens, and Nala is the handsomest of heroes; if the peerless wed the peerless how happy will be the union." Then the royal maiden softly said to the bird:—"Speak the same words to Nala!" And the bird fluttered its golden wings, and flew away to Nishadha, and told all to Nala.

The swan performs its mission.

Meantime the beautiful maiden grew pale and dejected in her father's Court at Vidarbha. She could not sleep, she often wept, she found no joy in banquets or in conversation, and she gazed upon the sky at night-time with a look of wild distraction; for her heart was wholly possessed with a deep love for Nala. So the maidens told her royal father that Damayantí was fading away into a deep melancholy. And the Raja of Vidarbha said:—"My daughter is full grown, and must be given away in marriage." And he sent Bráhmans round the world to proclaim a Swayamvara; and all the Rajas of the earth who had heard of the divine loveliness of Damayantí, flocked to the Court of Bhíma, with all the pomp of chariots and horses, and elephants, and armies. And Bhíma welcomed them all with due courtesy and entertained them well.

Melancholy of Damayanti.

Raja Bhíma proclaims a Swayamvara.

Assembling of the Rajas at Vidarbha.

Now at this time the holy sage Nárada ascended on high to the heaven of Indra. And Indra gave him honourable welcome, and said:—"Where, O sage, are all the Rajas, that they come not to my abode?" And Nárada replied:—"O cloud-compeller, all the Rajas and their mighty sons have gone to the Swayamvara of Damayantí, for she, the loveliest of maidens, is about to choose a husband for her-

Nárada, the sage, carries the news of the Swayamvara to Indra.

self." Then the gods were stricken as they heard of the transcendent beauty of Damayantí, and they exclaimed:—"We too will go to her Swayamvara!" And Indra, lord of Swarga, and Agni, god of fire, and Varuna, who rules the seas, and Yama, who judges the dead, called for their celestial chariots, and drove through the air to the city of Vidarbha; and as they approached the earth they beheld the hero Nala, as radiant as the sun, and as comely as the god of love; and they stayed their chariots in the blue air, and said to the heroic one:—"O Nala, we pray you to do our bidding." And Nala stood with folded hands, and said:—"Whatsoever you command, that I will do." So Indra, sovereign of the gods, said to Nala:—"Go now and tell the fair daughter of Bhíma that the four immortal gods have come from heaven to woo her, and that she must choose from amongst them whom she will." But Nala replied:—"O spare me this, for I too am enamoured with the damsel, and how can I woo her for another?" But all the gods spoke out with one accord:—"Have you not pledged yourself to do whatsoever we command? Delay not, therefore, nor belie your word." Then Nala said:—"The palace of Bhíma is strongly guarded, and I cannot enter the presence of the maiden." But Indra replied:—"No man shall stop you, only go!" Then Raja Nala entered the palace of Bhíma, and no man hindered him; and he reached the inner apartments, and beheld the beautiful damsel sitting amongst her maidens; and when the damsels saw him they sprang from their seats, and marvelled at his wondrous beauty. And Nala smiled sweetly upon Damayantí, and she with lovely eyes smiled sweetly in return, and said:—"O hero, how came you hither? How have you escaped the guards that my father has set around us?" Then Nala replied:—"O loveliest of damsels, my name is Nala, and I am a messenger from the gods, and through their power I have passed the gates unseen by men: Now the four gods desire to wed you, and pray you to choose one of their number to be your lord." And Damayantí bowed in reverence to the gods, and then smiled again upon Nala

Indra, Agni, Varuna, and Yama set off for the Swayamvara.

The gods prevail on Nala to ask Damayantí to choose one of them for her husband.

Indra renders Nala invisible.

and said:—"O Raja, the language of the golden-plumaged swan has kindled my soul, and I will choose no other lord but you; and if you spurn my love, I will take poison, or plunge into the water or the fire." And Nala replied:— "O beautiful maiden, how can you choose a mortal man in the presence of the bright gods? How can you refuse to be arrayed in heavenly raiment, and bright amaranthine flowers, and all the glory of the celestials? Where is the damsel who would not wed the radiant Agni, god of fire, whose mouths consume the world? Or the bright Indra, sovereign of the gods, at whose dread sceptre all the assemblies of the earth are forced to do justice and work righteousness? Or the majestic Varuna, lord of waters? Or the mighty Yama, judge over all the dead?" But Damayantí trembled at the words of Nala, and her eyes were filled with tears, and she said:—"I will pay due homage to all the gods, but you only will I choose to be my lord." And Nala went his way and told to the expectant gods all that Damayantí had said.

Damayanti refuses to choose any one but Nala.

Nala remonstrates.

Fidelity of Damayanti.

2. *The Swayamvara of Damayantí.*

At length the day of happy omen, the great day of the Swayamvara, dawned upon the city of Vidarbha. And all the Rajas, sick with love, passed through the glittering portals, and the court of golden columns, and entered the Hall of State, like lions entering their mountain lairs. And all the Rajas were adorned with fragrant garlands, and rich earrings of costly gems were hanging from their ears. And some had long arms, robust and vigorous as the ponderous battle-mace; whilst others were as soft and delicately rounded as a smooth serpent. With bright and flowing hair, and arched eyebrows, their faces were as radiant as the stars; and they filled the Hall of State, as the serpents fill the under world, or as tigers fill the caves in the mountains. But when Damayantí entered the hall, every eye was fixed, and every soul entranced, at her dazzling loveliness; and all the Rajas gazed upon her beauty, and were stricken with deep and passionate desire. Then the name

The day of the Swayamvara.

Assembly of the Rajas in the Hall of State.

Damayanti enters the Hall.

Each of the four gods assumes the form of Nala.

of every Raja was proclaimed aloud, and Damayantí glanced around her at the glittering crowd of suitors, and she saw in her dismay that there were five Nalas in the hall, for each of the four bright gods had taken upon himself the form of Nala. And Damayantí trembled with fear, and after a while she folded her hands in reverence to the gods, and said in sad and humble tones:—"Since I heard the language of the swan, I have chosen Nala for my lord, and have thought of no other husband: Therefore, O gods, I pray to you, that you resume your own immortal shapes and reveal Nala to me, that I may choose him for my lord in the presence of all." And the gods heard the piteous prayer of Damayantí, and they wondered at her steadfast truth and fervent love; and straightway they revealed the tokens of their godhead. Then Damayantí saw the four bright gods, and knew that they were not mortal heroes, for their feet touched not the earth, and their eyes winked not; and no perspiration hung upon their brows, nor dust upon their raiment, and their garlands were as fresh as if the flowers were just gathered. And Damayantí also saw the true Nala, for he stood before her with shadow falling to the ground, and twinkling eyes, and drooping garland; and moisture was on his brow, and dust upon his raiment; and she knew that he was Nala. Then she went in all maidenly modesty to Nala, and took the hem of his garments, and threw a wreath of radiant flowers round his neck, and thus chose him for her lord. And a sound of wild sorrow burst from all the Rajas; but the gods and sages cried aloud:—"Well done!" And Nala turned to the slender-waisted damsel, and said:—"Since, O maiden with the eye serene, you have chosen me for your husband in the presence of the gods, know that I will be your faithful consort, ever delighting in your words; and so long as my soul shall inhabit this body, I solemnly vow to be thine, and thine alone." Then the blest pair approached the gods with reverence, and the gods gave rare gifts to Nala. To him Indra gave the sight which sees the Unseen in the sacrifice, and the power to go unhindered where he pleased;

Perplexity of Damayantí.

Her prayer.

The gods grant her prayer and reveal themselves in their true forms.

Damayantí discovers Nala and gives him the garland.

Nala's vow to Damayantí.

Divine gifts of the gods to Nala.

and Agni gave him the mastery over fire, and power over the three worlds; and Varuna gave him the mastery over water, and the power of obtaining fresh garlands at will; and Yama gave him a subtile taste for food and eminence in every virtue.

Marriage of Nala and Damayanti.

Then Raja Bhíma, in his joy and pride, performed the marriage rites of his beautiful daughter and her chosen lord, and in due time Raja Nala carried away his bride to his own city. Thus the tiger among Rajas obtained the pearl of maidens; and henceforth the bliss of Nala and Damayantí was equal to that of the giant-slayer Indra and his beautiful Sachí. Radiant and excellent as the sun, Nala ruled all the subjects of his Raj with a just and equal sway. He performed an Aswamedha, with many rich gifts to holy men; and Damayantí bore him two children, a handsome son named Indrasen, and a beautiful daughter named Indrasena.

Damayanti bears a son and a daughter.

3. *The Gambling Match between Nala and Pushkara.*

Wrath of Kali at finding that Nala was chosen by Damayanti.

Now when the bright gods were returning from the Swayamvara to the heaven of Indra, they met the evil spirit Kali, accompanied by Dwápara.[2] And Indra said to Kali:—"Whither art thou going, O Kali?" And Kali replied:—"I am going to the Swayamvara of Damayantí; for I have set my heart upon having her for my bride." And Indra laughed and said:—"The bridal of Damayantí is ended, for in our presence she chose Raja Nala to be her lord." Then Kali was filled with rage, and bowing with reverence to the gods, he exclaimed:—"Since she hath preferred a mortal man to the immortal gods, heavy shall be her doom." But the four gods replied:—"It was with our consent that Damayantí chose her lord; and what maiden would not

Mirth of Indra.

Kali's threat.

The four gods remonstrate with Kali.

[2] This Kali must not be identified with the black goddess Káli, who has been identified with the wife of Siva, and was apparently unknown in the Vedic period. On the other hand, the Kali of the present story is a male personification of the Kali age, or the fourth and last age through which the world is now passing, and which is presumed to be one of vice and iniquity. In like manner Dwápara is a personification of the Dwápara age, or third age of the world. These personifications do not appear to belong to the Vedic period, but are the work of a subsequent epoch. In the old Vedic times Kali may have been the demon of the dice.

incline to one so virtuous as Nala? And he who has read the Vedas, and constantly adores the gods with pure offerings, and is gentle to all living creatures, and true in word and deed, he is equal to the immortal gods." Then the gods ascended on high, but Kali said to Dwápara:—"I will not stay my wrath, but henceforth I will keep watch on Nala, and you shall abide in the dice; and when the hour comes I will enter his soul and gain the mastery over him until I have cast him out of his Raj and parted him from his sweet bride." And from that hour the two evil spirits Kali and Dwápara dwelt in the palace of Nala.

Kali plots with Dwápara for the destruction of Nala.

Twelve years of happiness.

Twelve years passed away, and none in all the world were so supremely blessed as the beautiful Damayantí and her husband Nala. But on a certain evening Nala failed in duty, for he prayed to the gods with feet unwashen; and Kali seized the opportunity, and straightway entered into him and possessed his inmost soul. And Nala had a brother named Pushkara, and Kali said to Pushkara:—"Go you and play at dice with Nala, and I will make you the winner of his Raj." And Pushkara challenged Nala to a game at dice, and Nala and Pushkara sat down to play in the presence of Damayantí. And they played for gold and jewels and raiment, and for chariots and horses, but Nala was worsted at every throw, for Dwápara embodied the dice, and Kali had mastered him body and soul. Then the faithful friends of Nala prayed him to throw no longer, but he was maddened with the love of play, and shut his ears to all they said. And all the chief men of the Raj assembled at the gate of the Palace to arrest the frenzy of the Raja. And the charioteer entered the Hall and said to Damayantí:—"Lo all the city are gathered together, for they fear lest some dire misfortune befall the Raja." And Damayantí was stricken with deep sorrow, and she entreated the Raja to listen to the voice of his people, but he turned away from her beautiful and tearful eyes, and answered not a word; and so the play went on, and the people returned to their houses, saying:—"Surely this gambler cannot be the Raja." And when Nala had lost all his treasures, the sorrowing

Nala prays to the gods with unwashen feet, and Kali takes possession of him.

Kali brings about a gambling match between Nala and his brother Pushkara.

Nala's losses.

Nala's friends vainly remonstrate.

The chief men of the Raj interpose in vain.

Interference of the Council.

Damayantí told her nurse to summon the Council; and the Council assembled at the Palace, and Damayantí announced their presence to Nala, but he heeded not her words; and she was filled with shame, and left the Hall and went to her own rooms.

Damayantí retires from the Hall.

Then Damayantí sent for the charioteer, and spoke to him winningly, and said:—"You know what trust my lord the Raja has ever placed in you: Go now and harness the steeds to the chariot, and take my children to my father's city, and leave them in my father's house; and then dwell there, or go wherever you will." And the charioteer went to the Council and obtained their consent; and he took the noble boy and the beautiful maiden to the city of Vidarbha, and he gave them into the charge of Raja Bhíma; and then he went his way with great sadness of heart to the city of Ayodhyá and entered the service of Raja Rituparna.[3]

Damayantí summons the charioteer Várshneya, and sends her children to her father's house at Vidarbha.

Várshneya takes service under Rituparna.

Meanwhile, Nala had lost all his treasures and his chariots and his horses; and he staked his Raj and the vestments which he wore, and he lost all to Pushkara. And Pushkara smiled and said:—"O Nala, you have lost your all, excepting only your wife, Damayantí: Throw once more and stake Damayanti." At these words the heart of Nala was rent asunder, and he said not a word. And he took off all his robes and ornaments, and looked sadly upon Pushkara, and went out with but a single scanty covering, and Damayantí also had but a single covering, and she followed him slowly behind.

Raja of Ayodhyá. Nala loses his Raj, but refuses to stake his wife Damayantí.

Departure of Nala and Damayantí for the jungle.

4. *The exile of Nala and Damayantí.*

Then Pushkara proclaimed throughout the city:—"Whoever shall give food or shelter to Nala shall be put to death." And for three days and three nights Nala lived on fruits and roots, and his sorrowing Ráni followed behind him and did the same. Then Nala saw a flock of birds upon

Cruel proclamation of Pushkara.

The birds fly away with Nala's only covering.

[3] Some attempt has been made to fix the date of the story by reference to the position held by Nala and Rituparna on the respective lists of the Lunar and Solar dynasties; but the genealogies of both races have been so hopelessly garbled that no inferences of any real value can apparently be drawn from them.

the ground, and he said within himself:—"This day we shall have food." And he threw his only garment upon the birds, but they flew into the air and carried the garment with them.

Mock Nala.

And the birds spoke in human language, and mocked Nala in his misery, and said:—"O foolish Nala, we are the dice, and we came hither to rob you of your covering, for whilst you had a single garment left, our joy was small." Then Nala was in an agony, and he said to Damayantí:—"Weep not for me, but go to the house of your father: Yonder lies the road, and it passes through woods that have abundant fruits, and on the way are many hermitages of pious sages." But Damayantí burst into tears and replied:—"O my lord, your words will break my heart: How can I leave you in this lonely wood, when you have been robbed of all? No, I will stay and soothe your weariness, for the wisest physicians say that a true wife is the best balsam in every time of sorrow: If I go to my kindred it must be with you, and we must both go together." But Nala had not the heart to take refuge in the house of his wife's father; and he said:—"I will not seek refuge in your father's Raj: Once I went there in joy and pride, but now should I appear there I should only increase my shame."

Nala entreats Damayantí to go to her father's house.

Damayantí refuses unless Nala will accompany her.

Nala refuses to take refuge with his wife's father.

So Nala and Damayantí journeyed on together, and they made one garment suffice them. And they came to a brook, and Nala caught two fishes and laid them before his wife and went into the brook to bathe; and Damayantí in her hunger put her hand upon the fishes, but the touch of her fingers revived them like a draught of amrita, and they sprang back into the water. And when Nala returned he thought that Damayantí had eaten the fishes, but he said nothing, and so they still wandered on.

Wanderings of Nala and Damayantí.

The two fishes.

Now when both the Raja and the Rání were wearied with their toil and faint with thirst and hunger, they reached a little hut, and there they lay and slept upon the bare ground. And Damayantí was oppressed with sleep, but Nala was distraught with sorrow. And Nala awoke and thought of the Raj which he had lost, and the friends who had deserted him, and of his weary wandering in the jungle. And he grew frantic, for the evil spirit of Kali was working within

Dire extremity.

Nala tempted by Kalí to abandon his wife in the jungle.

him; and he said within his heart:—"If Damayantí remains with me she must bear certain sorrow, but if I leave her she may return to her father's house: If I go, I know not which is better for me, life or death; but for her no one will harm a wife so devoted and so beautiful." Then Nala pondered how he should divide the single garment between them; and he saw a sword that lay in the cabin, and he severed the garment in two, and he clothed himself with the half of the garment. Then he fled into the jungle, but came back again and beheld his wife sleeping. And he wept bitterly and said:—"My love, whom neither sun nor wind dared look upon, how will she awake? How will she wander alone through the deep jungle, haunted by serpents and wild beasts? May the Sun god and the god of wind protect her, though her virtue is her best guard." Then the mind of Nala was swayed to and fro, first by love and then by despair, until at last he left his wife alone in the hut, and rushed like one who is mad into the depths of the jungle.

Severs his wife's garment.

His irresolution.

His flight.

5. *Nala's desertion of Damayantí.*

Now when the slender-waisted Damayantí awoke from her deep slumber and found herself abandoned in the jungle, she shrieked aloud in grief and pain, and ran about the wood leaping in madness; and she sobbed very bitterly, and said:—"May that evil one who has caused this dread suffering to Nala, be smitten by a curse more fatal still." Thus she went wailing through the forest, until suddenly there came a great serpent and seized her in his grasp and coiled around her; and she cried out in great terror, and a huntsman heard her screams, and shot an arrow at the serpent's face, and released her from her peril. Then the huntsman brought her water and food, and refreshed her; and at his biddihg she told him all her story; but as he gazed upon her beautiful form, which was scantily covered by half a garment, a deep passion burned within him, and he whispered words of love. Then Damayantí was filled with wrath, and she cursed him in her bitterness of soul, and he fell down dead like a tree that has been stricken with lightning.

Damayantí's anguish.

The great serpent.

The huntsman.

Then Damayantí wandered on in quest of Nala until she met a caravan of merchants, with elephants, and camels, and chariots, and horses; and when the people saw her so beautiful and noble, and yet so pale and worn, they took compassion on her; and they told her they were going to the city of Chedi. And Damayantí went with the caravan, and when it was evening they came to a pleasant lake fragrant with lotos flowers, and they pitched their tents and encamped there. But at midnight there was a great cry, for a horde of wild elephants of the jungle had scented the tame elephants of the caravan, and rushed down upon the encampment, like mountain-tops rolling down to the valley; and they trampled upon the sleeping people, and crushed many with their heavy tread, and gored others with their fierce tusks. And the merchants shrieked aloud with terror, and some began to fly, and others stood gasping blind with sleep; whilst many struck each other down, or stumbled over the rough ground, or climbed the trees, or hid themselves in the holes in the earth. And Damayantí awoke amidst the dreadful turmoil; and some said that she was a woman of evil omen, and had worked all the mischief; and she was filled with shame and fear, and fled once again into the depths of the jungle.

Damayantí joins a caravan.

Pleasant encampment.

Terrible night attack of wild elephants.

Alarm of the merchants.

Escape of Damayantí.

After many days Damayantí entered the city of Chedi, and she was famished and distressed and broken down with sorrow. And she was clad in only half a garment, and her long hair was hanging dishevelled over her shoulders, and her gaze was wild and distracted, and her face was emaciated from long fasting. And the people of the city thought that she was mad, and a crowd of boys followed her and mocked her. And as she approached the gate of the palace, the mother of the Raja beheld her from the terrace, and sent her waiting woman to bring the wanderer in; and Damayantí entered the palace and told how her husband was a Raja, who had lost his all by dice, and how she had followed him into exile through the greatness of her love, but how he had left her in the jungle with only half a garment. And the eyes of Damayantí were filled with tears,

Pitiful appearance of Damayantí in the city of Chedi.

Damayantí invited into the palace by the mother of the Raja.

and the gracious lady bade her take up her abode in the palace, whilst the servants of the household went abroad in search of Nala. And Damayantí said to the mother of the Raja:—"O mother of heroes, I will dwell with you, but I will not eat the victuals left by others, nor wash the feet of others, nor converse with strange men." And the mother of the Raja agreed, and called her daughter Sunandá, and bade her take Damayantí to be her friend. And Damayantí dwelt in the palace many days as friend and companion of the Princess Sunandá.

Takes service under conditions.

Becomes companion to the Princess Sunandá.

6. *Adventures of Nala.*

Now when Raja Nala left Damayantí in the hut, he beheld a great fire in the forest, and he heard a voice crying:—"Hasten, Nala, and come hither!" And Nala remembered that on his bridal day the god Agni had given him power over fire; and he plunged into the bright flame, and saw the Raja of Serpents coiled up in a ring. And the Serpent said:—"I deceived the sage Nárada, and he has cursed me that fire should surround me until you save me." And the Serpent shrank to the size of a finger, and Nala lifted him up and carried him out of the fire. Then the Serpent bit Nala, and immediately the form of Nala was changed into that of a deformed dwarf, so that no man could know him. And the Serpent said to Nala:—"My poison shall work on the evil spirit who has entered your soul, until he leaves you free: Take now the name of Váhuka and enter the service of Rituparna, Raja of Ayodhyá; and you shall teach him the art of taming horses, and he shall teach you all the secrets of the dice: Therefore, sorrow no more, O Nala, for you shall see again your wife, your children, and your Raj; and when you would again resume your proper form, put on this change of raiment and think of me." So saying, the Serpent gave a change of raiment to Nala, and vanished away from his sight.

Nala rescues a serpent from a circle of fire.

Nala's form changed by the serpent.

Then Nala journeyed on to the city of Ayodhyá, and offered his services to Raja Rituparna, both as a tamer of horses, and as skilled in the art of cooking viands; and

Nala takes service with Rituparna, Raja of Ayodhyá, under the name of Váhuka.

the Raja engaged him, and bade him take heed that the horses were swift of foot; and he gave him Várshneya and Jívala to be his adjutants. Now Várshneya had been charioteer to Nala, and had driven his children to the city of Vidarbha; but Nala's form had been changed by the Serpent, and Várshneya knew him not. And every evening Nala used to sing this single verse:—

Meets his old charioteer Várshneya.

Nala's evening song.

"Where is she whom I left in the jungle to suffer hunger, thirst, and weariness?

"Does she think of me, her foolish lord, or does she sit in the presence of another?"

Nala's explanation.

And Jívala said to Nala:—"Who is she, O Váhuka, for whom you are grieving?" And Nala answered:—"A man there was bereft of sense, who had a faithful wife, but in his foolishness he forsook her in the wilderness; and ever since that time the man wanders to and fro in despair, for whether she lives or no he cannot say!"

7. *Discovery of Damayantí.*

Raja Bhíma sends Bráhmans in search of Damayantí.

Meantime, Raja Bhíma of Vidarbha had sent holy Bráhmans to every land in quest of his daughter Damayantí and her husband Nala; and the joyful Bráhmans, hoping for rich rewards, went through every city and every clime, but nowhere could they find a trace of those they sought. At length a certain Bráhman, whose name was Sudeva, went to the pleasant city of Chedi, and there he saw the slender-waisted Damayantí, standing in the palace by the side of the Princess Sunandá; and her beauty was dim, and seemed like the sunlight struggling through a cloud, yet he failed not to see that she was the daughter of Raja Bhíma. And the Bráhman spoke to her, saying:—"O daughter of Bhíma, your father has sent me to seek for you; and both he and your mother and your brethren are all well; and so too are your little ones, who are dwelling in your father's palace." And Damayantí remembered Sudeva, and made inquiry about all her friends. And the mother of the Raja came in and saw her talking to the

Damayantí discovered by Sudeva the Bráhman.

Bráhman; and presently she took the Bráhman aside, and said:—"Who is this lady to whom you have spoken? Who is her father, and who is her husband?" Then the Bráhman told all to the mother of the Raja, and he said:—"I knew she was the daughter of Bhíma, because of her peerless beauty; but from her birth a lovely beauty mark was to be seen between her eyebrows, and now it has passed away." When the Princess Sunandá heard the words of the Bráhman, she took water and washed away the traces of tears that were between the eyes of Damayantí, and the beauty mark was present to the eyes of all. Then the mother of the Raja exclaimed to Damayantí:—"You are the daughter of my sister: I know you by the mark, for I myself was present at your birth: Lo, all I have is yours." And Damayantí bowed to her mother's sister, and prayed that she might be sent to her two children at Vidarbha. And the palanquin was prepared, and a guard was ordered, and Damayantí was carried to her father's palace at Vidarbha. And when she saw her children her heart was filled with joy, and she passed the night in sweet slumber; but in the morning she went to her mother, and softly said:—"O mother, if my life is dear to you, I pray you to do all you can to bring back Nala." And her mother went to Bhíma and said:—"Your daughter is mourning for her husband Nala."

Identified by a mole as the niece of the mother of the Raja of Chedi.

Damayantí returns to her father's house at Vidarbha.

Her joy at seeing her children.

Her anxiety for Nala.

Then Raja Bhíma sent the Bráhmans once again to every land in search of Nala; and before the Bráhmans departed, Damayantí sent for them, and entreated them to cry aloud these words in every public place:—"Whither didst thou go, O gambler, who severed thy wife's garment, and left her in the lonely forest, where she still sits sorrowing for thee?" So the Bráhmans went forth to all lands, and they searched everywhere in crowded cities and quiet villages, and in the hermitages of holy men, and everywhere they repeated aloud the words of Damayantí, but no man took heed of the question respecting Nala.

Bráhmans sent to search for Nala.

Damayantí's directions to the Bráhmans.

8. *Discovery of Nala.*

Groaning of Nala on hearing the proclamation of the Bráhmans.

Now after a while a certain Bráhman went to the great

city of Ayodhyá, where reigned Raja Rituparna, and where Nala was dwelling in the guise of a charioteer and under the name of Váhuka. And the Bráhman cried aloud the question of Damayantí in all the streets and ways and market-places in the city, but no man heeded him. So he took leave of the Raja and prepared to depart, when Váhuka came to him and groaned in anguish and wept bitterly, and said:—"Even in the extremity of misery a noble woman is mistress of herself; and even when abandoned by her husband, she will not give her soul to anger." At these words the Bráhman left the city of Ayodhyá with all speed, and hastened to the city of Vidarbha, and told Damayantí all that Váhuka had said; and the eyes of Damayantí overflowed with tears, for she thought that she had found Nala. Then Damayantí went to her mother, and said:—"O mother, I must send a message to the city of Ayodhyá which my father Bhíma must not hear; and I will deliver it in your presence to Sudeva, that best of Bráhmans who found me in the city of Chedi; and as he brought your daughter to her father's house, so may he swiftly bring my royal husband from the city of Ayodhyá." So she sent for Sudeva, and requested him in the presence of her mother to go to the city of Ayodhyá, and to seek out Raja Rituparna, and say to him as if by chance:—"Damayantí, daughter of Raja Bhíma, is about to choose a second husband, and all the Rajas and sons of Rajas are hastening to Vidarbha: If you would be there you must make good speed, for to-morrow is the appointed day, and at sunrise she makes her choice, for Raja Nala cannot be found, and no man knows whether he be alive or dead."

Response of Nala to the proclamation.

Damayantí suspects that she has found Nala.

Sudeva directed to inform Rituparna that Damayantí was about to celebrate a second Swayamvara.

And Sudeva went to the city of Ayodhyá and performed the bidding of Damayantí; and when Rituparna heard the tidings that Damayantí was about to choose another husband, his heart burned to be there, but the way was far.[4] Then Rituparna went to Váhuka, his charioteer, and spoke

Desire of Raja Rituparna to be present at the second Swayamvara.

Rituparna consults Nala.

[4] The distance from the city of Ayodhyá on the river Goomtí, to that of Vidarbha on the river Taptí, must have been about five hundred miles as the crow flies.

to him with winning words, like one that asks a favour, and said:—"On the morrow the daughter of Bhíma will choose a second husband; I too would seek to win her, but the city of Vidarbha is afar off: Say then if you have horses that can reach it in a single day." Then the heart of Váhuka was smitten with anguish, and he wondered that the holy Damayantí should be driven to a deed so unholy, and he thought within himself that he would see if the tidings were true. So he folded his hands in reverence to the Raja, and said:—"I promise in a single day to reach the city of Vidarbha." And he went to the stables of the Raja, and pondered long over the horses; and he chose four that were very slender, but fleet and powerful for the road, and they had broad nostrils and large jaws; and he harnessed them to the chariot of the Raja. But when Rituparna saw the slenderness of the coursers, he cried out:—"What steeds be these? Have they strength and wind for such a journey?" And Váhuka replied:—"These horses will not fail to carry you to Vidarbha; but if you desire others, tell me which you will have, and I will harness them." But the Raja said:—"You know the horses best, and may harness what you will."

Anguish of Nala.

Nala engages to drive from Ayodhyá to Vidarbha in a single day.

Choice of horses.

9. *Nala's drive from Ayodhyá to Vidarbha.*

Now when the chariot was ready, Raja Rituparna took his seat, and commanded Várshneya to ascend likewise, whilst Váhuka drove. Then the fiery horses began to prance and paw the air, but Váhuka gathered up the reins, and cried out to the horses with a soothing voice, and they sprang into the air as if they would unseat their driver, and then tore along the ground as swift as the wind. And the riders were well nigh blinded with the speed; but the Raja marvelled and rejoiced greatly at the driving of Váhuka; and Várshneya said within himself, as he felt the rattling of the chariot and beheld the driving of Váhuka:—"Either this Váhuka must be the charioteer of Indra, or else he is my old master, Raja Nala."[5]

The chariot and horses set out for Ayodhyá.

Marvellous driving of Nala.

[5] The description of the driving of Nala might be compared with that of the

Speed of the horses.

The Raja's mantle.

Skill of the Raja in the calculation of numbers.

Nala counts the leaves and berries on a tree.

The Raja teaches Nala the secrets of dice in return for the secrets of horsemanship.

Nala freed from Kali.

Approach to the city of Vidarbha.

Damayanti recognizes the driving.

Thus the chariot flew along, like a bird in the air, through the deep forests, and over the rivers and mountains and broad lakes. And the Raja dropped his mantle and prayed Nala to halt a moment and pick it up; but Nala said:—"The mantle is miles behind, and we cannot return to recover it." And they passed a certain tree, and the Raja said to Nala:—"Mark now my skill in numbers, for I know the secrets of dice and the rules of calculation: On those two branches hang fifty millions of leaves, and two thousand and ninety-five berries." And Nala descended the chariot to count the leaves and berries; and whilst the Raja cried out that he could not wait, Nala persisted; and after a while Nala found that the numbering of the Raja was true to a single leaf. And Nala said:—"O Raja, teach me this skill of yours, and you shall learn from me all the secrets that I know in horsemanship." And the Raja did so, and when Nala knew the secret of the dice, the evil spirit Kali went forth out of him, and Kali vomited the poison of the serpent that was burning within him. And Nala would have cursed Kali, but he fled away and entered a tree, and men ever afterwards gave an evil name to that tree. Thus Nala was released from all his sufferings, but still he took not his own form of Nala, but remained in that of Váhuka the charioteer.

Now when it was near to the setting of the sun, the chariot approached the city of Vidarbha, and the heart of Nala beat faster and faster; and when they reached the city gates the watchmen on the walls proclaimed the coming of Raja Rituparna; and the rushing of the horses and rolling of the chariot-wheels were like the thunder which heralds in the coming rain; and the peacocks on the palace walls raised their necks and clamoured, and the elephants in the stables roared tumultuously. And the heart of Damayantí thrilled with delight as she heard the old familiar sound of her husband's driving; and she said:—"Unless Nala comes

driving of Jehu. "The driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi, for he driveth furiously." 2 Kings ix. 20.

this day, and I feel the gentle pressure of his arms, I will no longer live, but will perish by the fire."

10. *Damayantí recovers her husband.*

Damayantí fails to recognize him as Váhuka.

Then Damayantí ascended to the terrace on the roof of the palace, and looked down into the middle court; and she saw Raja Rituparna, and her old charioteer Várshneya, and the dwarfish and deformed Váhuka; and she beheld her father Bhíma receive Rituparna with all courtesy, although amazed at the suddenness of his coming; and she remembered Várshneya, and thought that he had learned to drive furiously like Nala; for she knew not Váhuka because of his altered form. But still her heart thrilled and she pondered deeply, for she remembered what Váhuka had said to the Bráhman; and she called her fair-haired handmaiden named Kesiní, and said to her:—"Go, my little maid, and speak to that chariot-driver who is short in stature, and find out who he is; and do you repeat to him the message which was brought to me by the Bráhman, and tell me what he says." So whilst Damayantí watched from the terrace, the blameless little maiden went into the middle court to speak to Nala.

Sends her maid Kesiní to Váhuka.

First interview between Kesiní and Nala.

Kesiní's questions and Nala's replies.

Meantime, Nala had taken the chariot to the stall, and after he had tended to his horses, he mounted the chariot and sat there alone. And the fair-haired Kesiní went to him and said:—"I salute you, O charioteer, and pray you to hear the message of my mistress Damayantí. She desires to know whence you came and wherefore you have come?" Nala answered:—"When my master, the Raja, heard that Damayantí would wed again, and would choose another husband on the morrow, he bade me drive him hither with all speed; and, lo, we have come this day all the way from the city of Ayodhyá." Then Kesiní said:—"And who is that other charioteer who came with you?" Nala answered:—"That is the renowned Várshneya, who was once the charioteer of Nala; and when his Raja went into exile he took service with Rituparna; and I

also serve Rituparna, for I am his charioteer, and the chief of all his cooks." And Kesiní said further:—"Does Várshneya know aught of Nala? And for yourself, how came you to know the story of Nala?" Nala answered:—"It was Várshneya who brought the children of Nala to this city, and then he went his way and heard no more of his old master." And Kesiní said still further:—"The Bráhman that lately went to the city of Ayodhyá was commanded by my mistress to cry aloud in every place:—'Whither didst thou go, O gambler, who severed thy wife's garment, and left her in the lonely forest, where she still sits sorrowing for thee?' Now it was you who gave the Bráhman his answer back; so I pray you to repeat that answer again, for my mistress desires to hear it." At these words of the blameless little maiden the heart of Nala was wrung with a deep sorrow, and his eyes overflowed with tears, and with a voice half choking from weeping, he thus repeated his reply:—"Even in the extremity of misery a noble woman is mistress of herself; and even when abandoned by her husband, she will not give her soul to anger." And Nala wept afresh, and the maid went back to Damayantí, and told her all that Váhuka had said, and described to her the bitterness of his sorrow.

Kesiní questions Nala respecting the reply he had given to the Bráhman.

Anguish of Nala.

Nala repeats his reply.

Kesiní returns to Damayantí.

Then Damayantí was still heavy at heart, wondering whether the charioteer could possibly be Nala; and she said:—"Go again, O Kesiní, and watch this man, and observe all that he does, and see that no fire or water be given to him; and whatsoever he does, be it human or divine, come back and tell to me." And Kesiní went out and watched Nala, and presently she returned and said:—"O Damayantí, never before did I behold a man so godlike; for if he approaches a low portal he never bows his head, but the portal rises above him; and when he prepared to dress the victuals for his master, the vessels were filled with water directly he looked at them; and when he had washed the meat he held some blades of grass towards the setting sun, and they blazed with fire of their own accord." And Damayantí remembered the gifts which the gods had

Damayantí sends Kesiní to watch Nala.

Kesiní perceives the divine powers of Nala.

Damayantí sends for a portion of the meat which Nala had cooked.

given to Nala on his marriage-day, and she said with a gentle voice:—"Go again, Kesiní, and bring me some of the meat that the charioteer is cooking." So the little maiden went into the kitchen and brought some of the food to Damayantí; and Damayantí tasted it, and cried aloud:—"The charioteer is Nala!" And her heart was stirred with vehement emotion, and she directed her maid to carry her two children to the charioteer. And when Nala beheld his son and daughter, as beautiful as the children of the gods, he wound his arms around them, and pressed them to his bosom, and burst into a flood of tears; and he said to Kesiní:—"O blameless maiden, the children are so like my own, that I have been compelled to weep: But go now, beautiful girl, for we are guests and strangers, and peradventure people will see that you are much with me, and may therefore suspect evil."

Damayantí sends her children to Nala.

Emotion of Nala.

When Damayantí heard from her handmaid of the deep affliction of the charioteer, she was seized with a deep longing to behold Nala, and she sent Kesiní to her mother, saying:—"We have watched the charioteer most closely, and we suspect him to be Nala, only that his form is changed: I pray you, therefore, either to permit him to be brought to you, or give me leave to have him brought to me, with or without the knowledge of my father." So the mother of Damayantí told to Bhíma all the secret counsel of his daughter, and the Raja permitted Damayantí to summon the charioteer, and to receive him in her own chamber.

Damayantí permitted to receive the charioteer in her own room.

Then Damayantí sent for Nala, and as she saw him she trembled greatly, and her hair was dishevelled about her shoulders, and she was arrayed in a mantle of scarlet; and the eyes of both Nala and Damayantí overflowed with tears. And Damayantí was almost overcome by her strong emotion, and she said:—"O Váhuka, did you ever know an upright and noble man who abandoned his sleeping wife in a wood? Who was he who thus forsook a beloved and blameless wife, who but Raja Nala? He who was chosen by me, and for whom I rejected the gods! He left me, who had borne him children; me, whose hand he had clasped in the presence of

Damayantí receives Nala in the garb of a widow.

Her question.

the immortal gods; me, to whom he had plighted his faith before the nuptial fire;—where is that promise now?"

Nala's reply.

And Nala gazed upon his long-lost wife like one in a dream, and he said:—"I lost my Raj by the dice, but the evil was wrought by Kali; I forsook you in the jungle, but the guilty deed was the work of Kali: Long time has Kali dwelt within me, but now he is subdued and gone, and for thy sake I made haste to come hither: But how may a high-born woman choose a second husband? Yet heralds are proclaiming throughout the world that the daughter of Bhíma will celebrate a second Swayamvara."

Damayantí's appeal to the three gods, Váyu, Súrya, and Soma.

At these last words Damayantí trembled and said:—"Do not suspect me of such shameless guilt! The Bráhmans proclaimed a second Swayamvara only to find thee, and to bring thee here: I call on the all-seeing Wind, the Sun, the Moon, who are the three gods that govern the three worlds, to attest the truth of what I say." Then the voice of the Wind was heard in the air: "Nala! she hath neither done nor thought evil, but for three long years hath treasured up her virtue in all its fulness: The second Swayamvara was but a plot to recover thee: Thou hast met with the daughter of Bhíma, and the daughter of Bhíma has met with thee: Take thy own wife to thy bosom!"

Voice of Váyu.

The reconciliation.

Even as the Wind was speaking the flowers fell in showers from heaven, and the gods sounded sweet music; and every doubt of the blameless Damayantí passed away from the mind of Nala, and he threw off his disguise and put on the garments that the Serpent had given to him, and at once resumed his proper form as Raja Nala. And Damayantí shrieked aloud and embraced her husband; and Nala, radiant as of old, clasped her to his heart, and the children were brought in, and the night passed away in the fulness of joy.

11. *Nala recovers his Raj.*

Rejoicings in Vidarbha.

And when the white-robed dawn was awakening a sleeping world, the sound of rejoicing ran through the city of Vidarbha. In every street the people exulted in the safe

return of Raja Nala, and adorned their houses with banners and garlands, and hung chains of flowers from door to door, and strewed the roadways with leaves and blossoms. And all was gladness in the palace at Vidarbha, for Raja Bhíma was transported with joy when he beheld the long-lost husband of his beloved daughter; and Raja Rituparna was filled with wonder and delight when he knew that his fiercely driving charioteer was no other than Raja Nala. Then they took counsel together how they might compel the evil-minded Pushkara to restore the Raj to his elder brother. And Nala had learned the whole art of throwing dice from his old master Raja Rituparna, and he saw how Pushkara had won the Raj, and resolved to win it back in like manner. So when one month had passed away and Nala was perfect in the game, he set off to Nishadha, with elephants and horses and chariots, and challenged his brother Pushkara to another throw, in which he would stake Damayantí against the Raj; and the wicked Pushkara eagerly agreed, and exulted in the certainty of winning the wife of Nala. But the throw was against Pushkara, and thus Nala won back his Raj and all his treasure; but when Pushkara humbled himself before him, Nala forgave him all, and dismissed him with many gifts to his own city. Then Nala returned to Vidarbha and brought away his beautiful Damayantí; and henceforth he reigned at Nishadha, as Indra reigns in heaven, and performed every holy rite in honour of the gods, with all the munificence of a royal devotee.

Nala recovers his Raj from Pushkara.

Happy reign of Nala.

The foregoing story of Nala and Damayantí is worthy of consideration on two grounds. In the first place, it furnishes abundant evidence that the events which form the groundwork of the tradition, and which have already been referred to the Vedic age, must have long preceded the age in which the poem was composed; and thus, as will presently be seen, it throws an extraordinary light upon the civilization

Review of the foregoing tradition of Nala and Damayantí.

of two different eras, which have been distinguished as the Vedic and Brahmanic periods. In the second place, it exhibits some of the most graphic pictures of Hindú life and manners which are to be found in Hindú literature, whilst it displays a knowledge of the human heart and an appreciation of woman's devotion, which stamps it as the production of a genuine bard.

Conflict of ideas indicative of two different eras.

As regards the light which the story throws upon two different eras, it may be remarked that there is throughout a conflict of ideas, especially as regards the character of the ancient Rajas, the social intercourse which prevailed between the two sexes, and the custom of widows re-marrying, which can only be referred to two different ages corresponding to Vedic and Brahmanic times. Thus the character of Nala as delineated at the opening of the story indicates such an opposition of heroic and religious ideas, that it is impossible to conceive of them both as existing in the same individual. It is easy to imagine a Kshatriya hero as a great archer, skilful in taming horses, beloved of women, and fond of gambling; but it is difficult to believe that such a hero would be deeply read in the Vedas, and it is impossible to reconcile the existence of a strong passion for gambling with the statement that the gambler had all his passions under perfect control. Moreover, being beloved of women may have been the characteristic of a hero of the old days of Aryan chivalry, but it would not be regarded as a virtue in Brahmanic times, when women were supposed to lead a life of seclusion, and were treated as entirely subservient to the other sex, and given in marriage without the slightest reference to the state of their

Opposition of heroic and religious ideas in the character of Nala.

affections. This point of view is still more plainly illustrated by the evident freedom of intercourse which prevailed between the sexes in the Vedic period, and the efforts of the narrator to disguise this freedom by the interpolation of detail which may be fairly regarded as supernatural. Thus there is the plain statement that Nala and Damayantí were deeply in love with each other; and from this statement only one inference can be drawn, namely, that they had seen each other, and consequently had been inspired with a mutual affection. Such an idea forms indeed the very essence of the Swayamvara, but it would scarcely be relished in a later age when women were kept in the inner apartments, and were never seen by men until the day of their betrothal. Accordingly, the Hindú bard has endeavoured to veil this implied freedom of intercourse by intimating that they had fallen in love with each other without having seen each other; and that they carried on an amatory correspondence by means of birds with golden plumage, who were gifted with a power of speech far beyond the mere imitative faculty of parrots, and corresponding in every respect to the intellectual faculty as exercised by human beings. Thus, whilst it is possible to believe that the interest of a youth or maiden may be awakened by a description of a beautiful damsel or a handsome hero, it is impossible to believe that the deep affection of the love-sick Damayantí for the gallant Nala could have existed without a sight of the beloved object; and it is still more impossible to believe that the episode of the speaking birds is anything more than a pretty fable introduced by the Hindú bard. Again, it is distinctly intimated that

Freedom of intercourse which prevailed in the Vedic period veiled by the introduction of supernatural details.

Incident of Nala making his way to the inner apartments disguised by the incident of the spell.

immediately before the Swayamvara the hero made his way into the presence of Damayantí, on which occasion the royal maiden pledged her troth to Nala, by promising to choose no other husband. Here again the prudish bard appears to be shocked, not at the interview itself, but at the possibility of such an interview taking place in the inner apartments. Accordingly, the incident is disguised by a story of a power to pass where he pleased without being hindered, which is said to have been granted to Nala by the god Indra, and which, like the story of the birds, may be safely rejected as a mere creation of the imagination. Again, the sequel turns upon a plot which was diametrically opposed to later ideas. Damayantí secures the presence of her long-lost husband at her father's city, by pretending that she was about to choose a second husband; an idea which appears so perfectly in accordance with the usages of the Vedic period, that the Raja of Ayodhya does not doubt the rumour for a moment; but, at the same time, was so foreign to the ideas of the Bráhmans, that the poet duly represents a second marriage as something unholy. Indeed an insinuation in the present day of the possibility of a second marriage, would be regarded as the deepest insult which could possibly be inflicted upon the father of the widow.

The second Swayamvara opposed to Brahmanical ideas.

The main purpose of the story seems to be to illustrate that conception of an avenging Nemesis which was undoubtedly familiar to the ancient bards. The ruin of Nala was brought about by an evil spirit named Kali, a personification of the Kali age, who envied his excess of happiness, and suddenly reduced him to the extremest misery. As regards the gambling, it is curious to remark that

Conception of an avenging Nemesis.

Gambling not regarded as a vice.

whilst the progress of the match and the evils of dice are delineated with a master hand, gambling itself is not held up to reprobation. On the contrary, whilst Nala loses his Raj by the dice, he recovers it by the same means, and even deliberately perfects himself in dice-throwing for the purpose of effecting this object.

Graphic pictures in the story.

The pictures which are presented in succession to the eye are calculated to impart a vivid conception of the civilization which prevailed in ancient times. The damsels chasing the birds in the royal garden, the melancholy of the love-sick maiden, and the flocking of the Rajas to the Swayamvara, are all told with considerable power. The description of the Swayamvara is unique, and contains none of those rude incidents which characterize the Swayamvara of Draupadí, and which must be referred to a rude and patriarchal age. On the other hand, Damayantí appears throughout as a maiden of high rank and blood; and whilst she is invested with the right of choice, and exhibits an undisguised preference for one particular hero, yet her maidenly modesty is preserved with rare delicacy, and even the public expression of her affection in no way militates against her conduct, as a pure, loving, and unsophisticated girl. The picture of the gambling match is equally sensational, though far less coarse and barbarous than the gambling match of Yudhishthira. The interest does not turn upon such a rude scene as that which transpired in the gambling booth of the Kauravas, and in which a matron was rudely handled by a successful gamester. Indeed, in the present instance, the interest of the scene turns upon the alarm of the Council and the people;

Damayanti and her maidens.

The Swayamvara of Damayanti compared with that of Draupadi.

The gambling match of Nala compared with that of Yudhishthira.

the convulsive efforts of the terrified wife to arrest her husband in his frantic play; and the quiet agony with which she sends her children to her father's house. Then, again, the devotion of Damayantí to her ruined husband, and her refusal to leave him in the jungle, are depicted with an appreciation of woman's love, and a truthfulness to human nature, which are the essence of real poetry. The incident of Nala's single garment being carried away by the birds is perhaps too artificial to awaken the sympathies of a European reader, but the episode of the fishes is touching to the last degree. So, too, is the scene of the pair spending the night in a hut;—the wife fallen into a heavy slumber through toil and privation; the husband sleepless from remorse, and maddened with the sight of the being whom his folly has reduced to such sore extremity, until he hesitates whether to stay or go; and, finally, the horror of Damayantí on awaking and finding that her husband has abandoned her, and that she is alone in the jungle. The story of the serpent and the huntsman, again, can scarcely perhaps be realized by the European to the same extent as it is by the Hindú; but the terrible night scene in which a horde of wild elephants rush through the encampment of a caravan, trampling and goring to death all that comes in their way, can scarcely fail to inspire every reader with awe and terror. The pictures of palace life are equally real. The old Rání beholding from the terrace of the palace at Chedi a mad woman followed by a crowd of boys; the rapid driving of Nala into the city of Vidarbha; the noise of the peacocks and elephants; the entertainment of one Raja by another without any question as to

The wife's devotion.

Episode of the birds.

Episode of the fishes.

Scene in the hut.

Night scene of the horde of wild elephants trampling down the caravan.

Palace life.

the reason of the visit; are scenes which evidently belong to an age of Hindú civilization. But the beautiful description of the interview between Nala and Damayantí, the final reconciliation of the husband and the wife, and the bringing in of the children, exhibit the workings of the human heart with a power and truthfulness which cannot fail to awaken a universal sympathy in every age or clime, in which husbands may be temporarily separated from their wives, and the children are introduced as forming the bond of union.

Exquisite description of the interview between Nala and Damayantí.

CHAPTER III.

LEGENDS OF DEVAYÁNÍ.

THE story of the love adventures of Devayání, the daughter of a Bráhman priest named Sukra, represents a new phase both in human character and Hindú history. The heroine Devayání furnishes a striking contrast to the modest, gentle, and devoted Damayantí, for she is a self-willed and vindictive girl, who prides herself upon being the daughter of a Bráhman priest, and who occasionally meets with some mortifying rebuffs, for which she seeks to gain a pitiful revenge. The father of the morose young damsel is a fair type of the Bráhman priests of both ancient and modern times, who occasionally keep a village or a tribe in strict subordination, by preying upon their superstitious fears, and arrogating to themselves the power of bringing rain from heaven, or healing diseases, or securing victory in battle, or averting any of the thousand ills to which flesh is heir. In the first instance Devayání entertains an unrequited affection for her father's pupil; and on finding that her advances are rejected she exhibits that sourness of disposition which subsequently becomes a marked feature in her character; and which leads to her engaging in a girlish quarrel

Character of Devayání, a contrast to that of Damayantí.

Devayání's father a type of the modern Bráhman preceptor.

with the daughter of the Raja as to their respective ranks, which is carried on with considerable spirit, and terminates in an unexpected and amusing manner.

The period in which the events seem to have transpired may be easily inferred from the surrounding circumstances. The story contains no satisfactory traces of the Vedic age, and evidently belongs to an early period in the Brahmanic age; inasmuch as the interest turns first upon the Brahmanical rule that a pupil is prohibited from marrying the daughter of his preceptor; and secondly, upon a primitive assertion of Brahmanical supremacy over a superstitious and barbarous tribe. There is one remarkable feature in the story which is of some historical importance. It will be seen that Sukra, the father of Devayáni, was not the priest and preceptor of a tribe of Aryans, or Devatás, but of a tribe of Daityas; and the Daityas were the dark-complexioned aborigines who are generally represented as the enemies of the Aryans. From this circumstance it may be inferred that the Bráhmans were not originally a tribe or nationality, but a professional class of priests who were as ready to officiate for one race as for another, for the Turanian aborigines of the country as well as for the Aryan invaders. The same circumstance also throws some light upon the means by which the Bráhman missionaries, who made their way into the territories of the aborigines, established their ascendancy over the rude and barbarous tribes who appear in the Rig-Veda as the enemies of the Aryans.

The story to be referred to the Brahmanic age.

The Bráhmans a professional class officiating for both Aryans and aborigines.

The legends respecting Devayáni may now be related as follows:—

1. *Refusal of Kanju to marry Devayáni.*

Sukra, priest of the Daityas.

Vrihaspati, priest of the Devatás.

In days of old when the Daityas and Devatás were at war for the government of the world, Sukra was the priest and preceptor of the Daityas, and Vrihaspatí was the priest and preceptor of the Devatás; and Kanju, the son of Vrihaspatí, became a pupil in the house of Sukra.

Love passages between Kanju, the pupil of Sukra, and Devayáni, the daughter of Sukra.

Now Sukra had a daughter named Devayání; and she and Kanju passed their time very pleasantly together; for both were very young, and Kanju always reverenced Devayání as though she were his own sister, and rendered her every service as though he were her brother. Sometimes she sang to him, and sometimes he sang to her, or he would relate to her famous stories of ancient times; and Devayání began to feel a deep love for her father's pupil, and could never be happy save in the presence of Kanju. But all this while the Daityas were wroth that their priest Sukra should teach all his spells and mantras to the son of the priest of their enemy. One day when Kanju was taking his tutor's cows to pasture, the Daityas carried him off; and Devayání seeing the cows return home without him, immediately told her father, who thereupon compelled the Daityas to restore the youth. After this when Kanju had gone into the jungle to gather flowers for the sacrifice, the Daityas again found him and carried him away; and Devayání went to her father, and acquainted him with what the Daityas had done, but Sukra refused to interfere, saying:—"I cannot be always compelling the Daityas to restore Kanju." Then Devayání urgently entreated her father, and said:—"O father, this youth is the son of Vrihaspatí and the grandson of Angiras, and he has served you better than a son, and if you do not interfere I will not live another day." So Sukra threatened the Daityas that he would pronounce a curse upon them unless they delivered up Kanju; and they, being sore afraid of the Bráhman, permitted the young man to return to the house of his preceptor.

Sukra delivers his pupil from the wrath of the Daityas.

Kanju prepares to return to his father's house.

Now when the years of the studentship of Kanju were

fully accomplished, he desired to leave his tutor and take up his abode in his father's house; and Sukra, having taught him all he knew, spoke very kindly to him, and permitted him to take his leave. Then Kanju went to Devayání and prayed her also to permit him to depart; but Devayání said: —"O Kanju, I have long nourished an entire friendship for you: Do you now demand me of my father in marriage, and espouse me in proper form." Kanju replied:—"Your father is the same to me as my father, and you are my perfect sister: How then can I ask for you in marriage? Moreover, you are the daughter of my tutor, and I have served you with clasped hands as a sign of reverence: How then can I take you for a wife, and suffer you to serve me?" Devayání said:—"If a young man be instructed by a preceptor he does not thereby become the son of his preceptor: You are the son of the Bráhman Vrihaspatí, and I am the daughter of the Bráhman Sukra, and there has always been a firm alliance between your family and mine, and for a very long time there has been a friendship between you and me: How then can it be in any way improper for you to demand me of my father in marriage?" But Kanju still persisted in his refusal, saying:—"I am the son of your father, and I will never presume to ask your father to give you to me; for you are the daughter of my tutor, and have the right of sisterhood in regard to me." Then Devayání was very wroth, and said:—"As you have refused to accede to my wishes, I pronounce this curse, that all the mantras you have learned of my father may prove of no avail when you utter them." Kanju replied:—"I have served you for many years, and it is my profound respect for you, as the daughter of my tutor, that prevents my asking for you in marriage: So as you have cursed me unjustly I also curse you that no Bráhman shall ever demand you in marriage; and that you shall only marry a Kshatriya." So saying, Kanju threw himself at the feet of Devayání, and declared that he was her servant; and then he went his way to his father's house, and she saw him no more.

Devayání proposes marriage.

Kanju declines.

Devayání remonstrates.

Kanju persists.

Devayání curses Kanju.

Kanju curses Devayání.

HISTORY OF INDIA. PART III.

2. *Devayáni pushed into a well by Sarmishthá.*

Devayáni, the daughter of the priest, and Sarmishthá, the daughter of the Raja, take their pleasure in the jungle.

Quarrel of Devayáni and Sarmishthá about the rank of their respective fathers.

Some time after this, Devayáni went out into the jungle, accompanied by Sarmishthá, the daughter of the Raja of the Daityas, and a number of other young damsels of the tribe, to take their pleasure amongst the trees and flowers. On reaching a pleasant pool, the damsels threw off their garments and went into the water to bathe, when it so happened that Váyu, the god of the wind, passed by, and seeing their clothes upon the bank, he mingled them up together. Accordingly, when the damsels came out of the water, some of them put on the clothes which belonged to the others, and Sarmishthá put on the dress of Devayáni, and Devayáni put on the dress of Sarmishthá. Devayáni then said to the daughter of the Raja:—"My father is a Bráhman, and yours is a Kshatriya, and therefore it does not become you to flaunt about in my clothes." Sarmishthá replied:—"When my father sits in Council, your father enters with clasped hands and pays him reverence; so what honour can I gain by wearing your clothes? If you say another word about it, I will order my maids to beat you and thrust you out of the city." Devayáni replied with a scowl so bitter, that Sarmishthá slapped her face, and pushed her into a dry well, and leaving her there returned with her other companions to the city.

Devayáni pushed into the well.

Devayáni delivered from the well by Raja Yayáti.

Now it so happened that a great Raja named Yayáti was hunting that very day in the same jungle, and being very thirsty he approached the well, where instead of water he saw a beautiful young damsel. Accordingly, the Raja asked her who she was, and what she was doing in that well; and when he had heard her story he stretched his right arm into the well and bade her take his hand. So the Raja took hold of her hand and drew her out of the well, and she uttered a blessing upon him, and he then took leave of her and returned to his own city.

3. *Vindictiveness of Devayáni.*

Devayáni refuses to return to the city of the Daityas.

Devayáni then proceeded a little way in the direction of

her father's house, when she was met by her own maid who had come out to rescue her, and who wept very much at seeing her; but she told the girl that it was no time for weeping, and that she had better go and tell Sukra what had happened, for that she herself would never enter the city again. The maid carried the story to Sukra, and he was exceedingly wroth at hearing that his daughter had been pushed into the well by the daughter of the Raja. He set off for the jungle, and taking Devayáni in his arms, he bade her not to grieve, for whatever might have been her offence against the Princess, it had been more than wiped away by the insult she had received. But Devayáni was determined that her father should procure her revenge, and she said that she cared very little about being thrust into a well, in comparison with hearing that her own father stood with clasped hands in the presence of Sarmishthá's father, and begged alms of him, and that it was because of this saying of Sarmishthá that she was resolved upon never again entering the city. Sukra desired her not to be troubled about that matter, for he never stood with clasped hands in the presence of the Raja, and asked alms of him, but the Raja stood in that posture before him; and the Raja and his tribe were his slaves, for without his prayers they could never procure the rains to fall in proper season. But Devayáni refused to be pacified; and though he discoursed to her upon the merit of patience and longsuffering, and of repaying good for evil, she declared that her heart still burned with the taunts of Sarmishthá, and that it was better to die than to live with such insolent people.

Anger of Sukra with the Raja's daughter.

Devayáni refuses to be comforted.

Sukra, seeing his daughter in such affliction, was greatly grieved, and he went to the palace, and found the Raja sitting with his Council. And he was received with every respect by all present, and invited to take the highest seat; and after a short pause, he spoke to the Raja as follows:—"He who does evil to another will certainly reap the fruits of that evil, either in his own person or in the persons of his posterity: I am a man of mortifications and penances who has fallen amongst you, and of me you have received nothing

Sukra threatens to abandon the Raja of the Daityas.

but unmixed good: By the efficacy of my prayers the rains have fallen in their proper season, and by my mantras your wounds have been healed after the battle: In return you have twice carried away the young man Kanju, who came to me for instruction, and now my daughter has been grossly insulted by your daughter, and thrown into a well: After this I will remain with you no longer." Then the Raja was alarmed, and he tried to pacify the Bráhman, saying:—"Why do you hold such language to us? Have we not always treated you with respect? If the children have quarrelled amongst themselves, that is no reason why you should be offended with us; and if you forsake us, we müst fly to the islands of the ocean, for without your aid we shall never be able to withstand the Devatás." Sukra replied that the Raja and his tribe might do what they liked, but that he was determined to leave a country in which his daughter had been so grievously insulted. The Raja and the whole of the Council were then greatly alarmed, and humbled themselves very much before the Bráhman; and the Raja laid his head at the feet of Sukra, and began to weep, and to implore the priest to pardon him. Sukra replied that if the Raja would pacify his daughter Devayání then he would remain, but unless she were reconciled he must go away to another country.

Alarm of the Raja.

Humiliation of the Raja and all his Council before the Bráhman.

Then the Raja of the Daityas, accompanied by all his Council, went out of the city to seek Devayání, and having found her, the Raja spoke to her as follows:—"We are all the slaves of your father, and if my daughter has behaved with incivility towards you, I will do with her according to your command." Devayání replied:—"I shall be satisfied upon one condition, that whensoever my father shall give me to a husband, your daughter, who has thrown me into a well, shall be given to me as my servant." The Raja said:—"This is a light thing for me, who am ready to sacrifice my own life to appease Sukra: Why, then, should I hesitate to give you my daughter?" So he sent a messenger to the palace to tell Sarmishthá that she was to enter the service of Devayání. And Sarmishthá replied:—

The Raja promises that Sarmishthá shall be servant to Devayání.

Sarmishthá obeys.

"Whatever my father commands I will obey, for I have no remedy." The Raja's daughter then set out with her slave girls to present herself to her father; and he immediately made her over, together with her maids, to the service of the daughter of the Bráhman. Devayání then proceeded with great joy into the city, accompanied by her father; and henceforth Sarmishthá presented herself every day to Devayání to receive her commands and do what she was ordered, and then returned to her own apartments.

4. *Marriage of Devayání and Yayáti.*

Devayání goes with Sarmishthá and her maidens to the well.

One day Devayání went out of the city, attended by Sarmishthá and her maids, and they came to the place where Sarmishthá had pushed Devayání into the well. In this pleasant spot, where the trees were loaded with delicious fruits, and the verdure was enlivened by running streams, Devayání sat down upon the grass; and some of her companions sat by her, whilst others stood round about them in groups conversing. At that moment Raja Yayáti was hunting in the forest, and whilst in hot pursuit of a stag, he suddenly burst in upon the damsels. The sight of so much loveliness almost deprived Yayáti of his senses, for they were all in the prime of beauty; though Devayání and Sarmishthá were incomparably more lovely than the others, whilst in dignity and grace Sarmishthá was superior to Devayání. The Raja immediately alighted from his horse and begged the damsels to tell him who they were; and Devayání answered him and said:—"I am the daughter of Sukra, the preceptor of the Daityas, and this is Sarmishthá, the daughter of the Raja of the Daityas, and wherever I go, she always attends me." Raja Yayáti replied:—"Sarmishthá is the daughter of a great Raja, and excels you in elegance: How then is it that she has become your slave?" Devayání said that it was by the will of God, and desired him not to ask any more such questions, but to answer her inquiries and tell her who it was that had come amongst them arrayed in royal vestments and with a resplendent counten-

Approach of Raja Yayáti.

Yayáti inquires how Sarmishthá has become the servant of Devayání.

ance. The Raja replied that his name was Yayáti, that he was descended from a long line of Rajas, and that he had come into the forest to hunt deer, in like manner as she had come to gather the flowers; and he likewise said that whatsoever she commanded him to do, he would perform. So Devayání said:—"All these damsels are my slaves, and this lady also, who is the daughter of a great Raja, is my slave; and my request to you is that you espouse me in due form." Yayáti replied:—"I am a Kshatriya and you are a Bráhman: How then can I take you for my wife?" Devayání said:—"All the Kshatriyas were begotten by the Bráhmans, and you yourself are descended from a Rishi." Yayáti replied that this was true, but that the rule of life had changed, and that it was not proper for him now to marry the daughter of a Bráhman. But Devayání rejoined that the mode of espousal among the Kshatriyas was for the man to take the woman by the hand, and this he had already done with her; and she reminded him of his having delivered her from the well, when he had taken her by the hand and lifted her out; and she said:—"Since you have given me your hand and taken mine, I will never give my hand to any other husband." So the Raja was afraid of her, and said:—"If your father will give you to me I will espouse you, but I cannot take you without the consent of your father."

Devayání requests Yayáti to espouse her.

Yayáti excuses himself.

Devayání urges that he espoused her when he delivered her from the well.

Yayáti's reply.

Then Raja Yayáti went his way to the house of Sukra, and respectfully saluted him. At that moment Devayání returned also from the forest, and entered the house, and said to her father:—"This is the Raja who gave me his hand to deliver me from the well, and since he has given me his hand, I will never give mine to any other man." Then Sukra said:—"O Raja, since you have first given your hand to my daughter, I now give my daughter to you: You are a mighty Raja, and I have an unbounded affection for my daughter, and I therefore pray you to use her kindly." Yayáti replied:—"I too am very desirous for this marriage, but I am afraid lest I commit a crime in marrying a Bráhman." Sukra said:—"Take no concern: I will absolve you from any guilt in this respect, and pray the Almighty that true es-

Yayáti's interview with Sukra.

Marriage of Yayáti and Devayání.

teem and affection may subsist between my daughter and you." Sukra then chose a fortunate moment, and performed the rites of marriage between Raja Yayáti and his daughter Devayání.

Yayáti departs with Devayání and Sarmishthá to his own city.

After many days Raja Yayáti took his leave of Sukra, and departed with his wife Devayání for his own city; and Devayání took Sarmishthá with her. In due course they reached the city of Yayáti, which was as resplendent as the city of Indra; and there the Raja placed Devayání in a splendid palace, according to her rank, and appointed a house for Sarmishthá in the garden. Then Raja Yayáti lived for a long while in great happiness with his wife Devayání, and she gave birth to two sons, Yadu and Turvasu.

5. *Sarmishthá's revenge.*

Love passage between Yayáti and Sarmishthá.

At length it so happened that one day Raja Yayáti went to walk in the garden wherein was the house of Sarmishthá, and as he passed by she came out and made him a reverence. And the Raja was enamoured with her beauty and elegance, and he entered her apartment and sat down, and said to her:—"You are the daughter of a great Raja, and I am very desirous to espouse you, but when Sukra sent you along with Devayání to accompany me hither, he bade me take every care of you, but never to make you my wife, and I pledged myself to obey, and now I do not know how to escape from my promise." Sarmishthá replied:—"A friend is a friend's second self; Devayání and I are such friends: Therefore when you married her, you at the same time married me." Yayáti then said:—"It is my rule of conduct never to refuse a request which any one may please to make; and therefore whatever you may ask of me I will assuredly grant." So Sarmishthá asked that she might become the mother of a son.

Sarmishthá gives birth to a son.

Some months after this it was told to Devayání that Sarmishthá had given birth to a son; and she was greatly afflicted, and went to Sarmishthá, and said:—"So you could not persevere any longer in the preservation of your chast-

Wrath of Devayání.

ity: Who is the father of this child?" Sarmishthá replied: —"A Rishi of the most holy life and conduct came to me, and I desired him to espouse me: He did espouse me, and this son is the fruit of our union: I have committed no crime in this!" Devayání said:—"If this be true you are innocent: but do you not know who that Rishi was?" Sarmishthá replied:—"The light of that Bráhman was like that of the sun, and from the greatness of my awe I could not ask him his name." Devayání said:—"As this is the case you have done right, and I have not suffered by your wrong doing." So she returned to her own palace.

Sarmishthá's excuse.

Devayání discovers that Yayáti is the father of Sarmishthá's children.

After some years Raja Yayáti was walking in the garden with Devayání, when they came to the house occupied by Sarmishthá; and Devayání saw three boys at play, who appeared to be the most beautiful children in the world. She accordingly asked the Raja whose children they were, for their countenances greatly resembled his own. The Raja gave her no answer; so Devayání called the boys and asked them whose sons they were. The boys immediately pointed with their fingers to the Raja, and said:—"We are his sons;" and then pointing to Sarmishthá, they said:—"That is our mother." They then ran to the Raja, and tried to put their arms round his neck; but he, in order to dissemble with Devayání, and keep her in good humour, thrust the children away, and they went crying to their mother. Devayání then turned to Sarmishthá, and said:—"It is all a lie you told me about a Rishi coming to you: It is all my own fault, for not keeping you day and night in constant attendance upon me: But you are the daughter of a Daitya, and a lie is no offence in your eyes." Sarmishthá replied:—"I told you no lie at all, for the Raja is a Rishi, inasmuch as he follows the same form of worship as the Rishis: Besides, I am no purchased slave that I may not look out for a husband without your leave." Devayání then told the Raja that she would never more enter his house to have a slave treat her as an equal in his presence. So she immediately went away to the house of her father.[1]

Sarmishthá's defence.

Devayání returns to her father's house.

[1] Here the story virtually ends. Devayání declared that she would live no

The foregoing legends of Devayáni are valuable relics of the early age of Brahmanism, and throw a new light upon one of the most obscure portions of Hindú history. The most important element in the story is perhaps the opposition which is exhibited between the Devatás, or fair-complexioned Aryan invaders, and the Daityas, or dark-complexioned aborigines of the country. In the Rig-Veda this opposition clearly appears as one between the invaders and the aboriginal inhabitants; and as the Vedic hymns are the expression of Aryan sentiments and ideas, the aborigines are naturally alluded to in terms of hatred and reproach as robbers and cattle-lifters. In the subsequent age to which the foregoing legends belong, the traditions of the old wars between the Aryans and the aborigines became converted into mythical legends of wars between the Devatás, or gods, and the Daityas, or demons, which was carried on for the empire of the world. This circumstance has led to a strange confusion of ideas in many of the Brahmanical versions of the old traditions. Sometimes the term Devatás refers to the Vedic pantheon, in which Indra appears as sovereign; sometimes, however, as in the present story, it seems to refer to the Aryan people, who were the worshippers of the Vedic deities. Then, again, the

Review of the foregoing legends of Devayáni.

Opposition between the Devatás, or Aryans, and the Daityas, or aborigines.

Expression of the opposition in the Rig-Veda.

Subsequent conversion of the traditionary wars of Devatás and Daityas into mythical wars of gods and demons.

Confusion in the application of the terms Devatás and Daityas.

longer with the Raja, and carried her complaint to her father Sukra, who thereupon pronounced a curse of old age upon Yayáti. The curse is said to have taken effect, but Sukra offered to remove it by transferring it to any one of Yayáti's sons, who would agree to accept the infliction. Yadu, his eldest son by Devayáni, refused, and was cursed that his posterity should never enjoy dominion; and he ultimately became the ancestor of the Yádavas, or cowherds. Then all the other sons of the Raja refused, and were cursed in like manner, excepting the youngest son by Sarmishthá, who was named Puru, and who agreed to bear the burden of his father's old age for a period of a thousand years, and who ultimately became the ancestor of the Pándavas and the Kauravas.

term Daityas was applied both to demons and to the aborigines, and having thus become current as a term of reproach, it was apparently applied in a still later age to the Buddhists. Thus the question occasionally arises as to whether the term Daityas applies to the aborigines who preceded the Aryans, or to the demons who fought against the gods, or to the Buddhists who fought against the worshippers of the Linga. In the present instance the term undoubtedly applies to the aborigines.

Friendship between the Bráhman preceptors of tribes who were at enmity.

Another point for consideration is the curious friendship which existed between the Bráhman priests of rival tribes, even when those tribes were at war. Thus the son of the priest of the Devatás is entertained as a pupil in the house of the priest of the Daityas; a circumstance which naturally excited the jealousy of the Daityas, and led to that animosity of the Daityas towards the pupil, which, but for the interposition of Sukra, would have led to his destruction.

Mythical detail representing the Yádavas as descendants of Yayáti and Devayání.

The legend of the marriage of Devayání and Yayáti seems to be cumbered with some mythical detail for the purpose of ennobling the tribe of Yádavas, to which Krishna belonged, by representing them to have been descended from one of the ancient Rajas of Bhárata and the daughter of a Bráhman. In the genealogical lists Yayáti appears as the great-grandfather of Raja Bhárata; a circumstance which may well be doubted, if the theory be accepted that the Bráhmans held but a subordinate rank in the Vedic age. The story of Sarmishthá is very suggestive, but scarcely calls for comment. It may, however, be observed that the explanation of Sarmishthá, that a Rishi was the father of her chil-

dren, refers to an extraordinary and revolting dogma, which is especially connected with the worship of Krishna, that a woman acquires religious merit by intercourse with her religious preceptor; and even in the present day this abominable idea has not been wholly eradicated from India, and notably finds expression amongst a sect in the Bombay Presidency which is known by the name of the Maháráajas.

Significant expression in the story of Sarmishthá of the privileges claimed by certain Bráhmans.

CHAPTER IV.

CHANDRAHASA AND BIKYA.

Romantic character of the story.

Scene laid in the Dekhan.

Allusions to temples.

Education of young ladies in reading and writing.

Belief in the influence of the stars both upon the fortune and the physiognomy.

THE story of Chandrahasa and Bikya appears more like a romance than a historical tradition, and seems to belong to a much later era than any of the foregoing legends. In the first place, it will be noticed that the scene is laid in the Dekhan, or south of India. The narrative contains allusions to temples which do not appear to have existed in the Vedic age; and indeed it may be remarked that no ruins of temples have hitherto been found in India of a date antecedent to the age of Buddhism. Again, the story turns upon a letter which was written by a Minister to his son, and which a young lady could not only read, but was able to alter with her own hand; circumstances which plainly indicate a modern origin; for in the earlier legends messages are always carried by word of mouth, and none of the ancient heroines appear to have been able to read or write. The story is based upon a belief in astrology, and involves the idea that the influence of the stars is perceptible not only in the fortunes of an individual, but in his physiognomy; a belief which was once as widely spread in Europe as it still is in India, and to this day the terms mercurial,

jovial, and saturnine are employed to express those characteristics of temperament which were once supposed to result from the influences of the planets Mercury, Jupiter, and Saturn.

The story, which needs no preliminary explanation, may now be related as follows:— The story.

1. *Chandrahasa, the fortunate boy.*

Far away in the farthest extremity of the Dekhan, in the country where camphor is collected, there lived a Raja who was doomed to suffer the severest adversity. To this Raja a son was born when the full moon was in the most favourable of all the lunar mansions, and who was thus destined to enjoy the highest prosperity. Very soon after the birth of this son, a powerful enemy invaded the country, and the Raja was slain with most of his army, and his Rání perished on the funeral pile. The nurse then fled away with the infant to a city named Kutuwal, but told to no one the secret of the child's parentage. She put herself out to service, and supported herself and the child by the proceeds of her toil; but after three years she died, and the little boy was thus thrown destitute upon the world. Birth of Chandrahasa. Preserved alive by his nurse.

The child now wandered about without a soul to care for him. Sometimes the people of the city gave him a little provision out of charity, and at night he sheltered himself in a pagoda. When he was five or six years old he began to associate and play with other children of his own age; and sometimes the boys would take him to their own homes, and their mothers, hearing that he was without a parent or a friend, would take pity upon him, and give him victuals and clothes, and wash him and take a liking to him. One day he happened to go to the house of the Minister of the Raja of Kutuwal, and a number of Rishis and astrologers were present who were well skilled in the science of physiognomy; and when they saw the boy they said to one another:—"Who is he? for on his face are all the signs of royalty." No one, however, knew him, and when they Destitution of the child. The Rishis predict his future greatness to the Minister of the Raja of Kutuwal.

asked the Minister about him, he replied that he had many boys loitering about his house, and that he knew nothing of him. Then the men of science said to the Minister :—"The signs of greatness and royalty are so manifest upon this boy, that one day he will surely be the ruler of this country, and all your people and all your property will hereafter belong to him."

Jealousy of the Minister.

When the Minister heard these words he saluted the Rishis and philosophers, each one according to his rank, and dismissed them. He then began to reflect upon their words, and to consider that they were not persons likely to say anything which was not well founded. Therefore, to be beforehand with the boy, and prevent his doing any mischief, he determined to put him to death; and he hired some Chandálas to take him into the jungle and make away with him. The assassins led the lad away by night, and when they drew their swords to kill him he prayed to God for succour; and God changed their hearts, and they took compassion on him, and resolved not to kill him. But as the Minister had desired them to bring to him some token or proof from the boy's body that they had fulfilled his instructions, they looked over his body and found that he had six toes; and they cut off the sixth toe, and carried it to the Minister, who was thereupon much pleased, and gave to each man a milch buffalo.

Resolves on the death of Chandrahasa.

The assassins relent and leave the child alive in the jungle.

Chandrahasa brought up by a Zemindar.

About this time a certain dependent of the Minister, whose duty it was to go about the country and receive the rents and correct injustice, was passing through the jungle, when he heard the cry of the boy. He hastened to the spot, and seeing the lad lying wounded, and being very much struck with his countenance, and having no child of his own, he carried him home to his wife and adopted him as his son. He also called in the astrologers of that neighbourhood, who declared that the boy had a most powerful nativity, and would of a surety become a mighty Raja. They also said that when the boy laughed his face resembled the moon, and that he ought, therefore, to be called Chandrahasa, or "Moon laughing." So the boy was named Chandrahasa.

2. *Conquests of Chandrahasa.*

Prosperity of the Zemindar.

From that day forward everything prospered in the house of Chandrahasa's adopted father. The milch kine and buffaloes gave twice as much milk as heretofore, and the crops produced tenfold. Meantime, Chandrahasa was carefully educated in arms and sciences; and when he was grown up, he was desirous of making war. Now there were many refractory vassals whom the Raja of Kutuwal had frequently directed the Minister to subdue, but who had ever routed his troops and compelled them to retire. Chandrahasa went out and fought against these rebels, and slew them all; and he carried their wives and children into captivity, and brought away abundance of spoil.

Conquests of Chandrahasa.

Achievements of Chandrahasa made known to the Raja and his Minister.

At the achievements of Chandrahasa, his adopted father was filled with delight, and carried off a large present to the Minister, and told him how his son had conquered the rebellious vassals and brought away abundance of spoil. Whereat the Minister was exceedingly pleased, and carried a portion of the spoil to the Raja, saying:—"I sent one of my own dependents to attack the Chieftains of the rebellious provinces; and he has now destroyed all the malcontents, and brought away all their treasures." The Raja immediately asked:—"Which of your dependents was it who has done this service? You, at the head of my whole army, have often gone against these very rebels and never could subdue them: What servant is it of yours who has had so much better success?" The Minister replied:—"I have been much ashamed of my own repeated failures, but the Almighty has now delivered me from my disgrace." Then the Raja was satisfied; and bestowed much encouragement and favour upon the Minister, and even conferred upon him the districts which had been conquered. And the Minister returned to his house in great joy, and in his turn showed much kindness to his dependent, and conferred upon him a portion of the conquered lands.

Wealth of the Zemindar excites the jealousy of the Minister.

Chandrahasa then dug many wells in his father's city, and built many resting-places for travellers, so that great

numbers of people flocked to that city, and passed their lives in comfort and tranquillity; and the city increased mightily. Now the father of Chandrahasa paid every year a revenue of twenty thousand pieces of gold, namely, ten thousand pieces to the Raja, five thousand to the Raja's zenana, and five thousand to the Raja's Minister. But he became so prosperous that he determined to pay seven times the amount he had been accustomed to pay.

3. *Jealousy of the Minister.*

The Minister leaves his office in charge of his son and visits the Zemindar.

Meantime the Minister had grown very jealous of his dependent, who had conquered enemies whom he himself had failed to conquer, and who paid seven times the amount of revenue he was called upon to pay; and he determined to leave the duties of his own post, as Minister to the Raja, in the charge of his son Madan, and to pay a visit to the house of his dependent, and ascertain, with his own eyes, the cause of his extraordinary wealth.

Request of Bikya, the daughter of the Minister.

Now at the moment the Minister was about to depart on his journey, his blooming daughter Bikya presented herself before him covered with blushes, for she was anxious to be married, but knew not how to explain her wishes to her father. Accordingly, she said that she had a mango tree, the fruit of which was ripe, and she wished a feast might be given that the fruit might be gathered in its prime; meaning thereby that she herself was the tree, and that she wished her own marriage feast to be celebrated. But the Minister, in haste to depart, heeded not the meaning of her words, and said that the feast might be given; and thus without knowing it he led his daughter to believe that he would speedily give her to a husband.

The Minister arrives at the house of the Zemindar and discovers Chandrahasa.

The Minister then went on his way out of the city, and in due time arrived at the house of his dependent, where he was received with every mark of respect and submission. Then he made inquiry respecting the extraordinary wealth and good fortune which had befallen his dependent, and learned to his surprise that the prosperity was all due to an adopted son, who had been found in the jungle with his foot

bleeding from the loss of a sixth toe. The truth then broke upon his mind, that this was the same boy whom he had sent into the jungle to be killed; and that the assassins had deceived him by sparing the life of their victim and bringing him the toe; and he was exceedingly wroth. But when he beheld the young hero Chandrahasa, and saw that he was far superior to his own son, Madan, and that his face was as resplendent as the full moon, and that in grace and dignity he was equal to the gods, he was very jealous and sought to destroy him; for the Raja of Kutuwal was old, and had no sons and only one daughter; and the Minister had schemed that his own son Madan should marry the daughter of the Raja, and succeed to the Raj; but he now felt assured that should Chandrahasa once enter the presence of the Raja, Madan would be supplanted, and the adopted son of the dependent would be exalted to the highest place in the Raja's favour.

The Minister in jealousy resolves on the destruction of Chandrahasa.

4. *Plot of the Minister frustrated by Bikya.*

But whilst the Minister was bursting with wrath he kept his countenance and concealed his anger from the standers-by; and he wrote a letter to his son Madan, and requested Chandrahasa to carry it to the city; and the letter was as follows:—

Letter of the Minister to his son Madan.

"May my son eat the fruits of youth, and know that this same Chandrahasa is my *enemy*, and that he is eager to get possession of all my property: Look not you to his youth or comeliness, nor trouble yourself as to whose son he is, or whether he be a man of rank, or learning, or abilities, but give him *poison*."

Chandrahasa readily accepted the mission, and setting forth with the letter, saw the most favourable omens on his way. At starting, he met a newly-married man taking his bride home, with a cavalcade of tom-toms and trumpets. Further on he met a cow with a calf just born, which the cowherd was driving to his house. At last he arrived at the beautiful suburbs of the city, and came to the most charming garden he had ever seen; and being very weary, he tied

Chandrahasa carries the letter.

Goes to sleep beside a garden.

his horse to a tree, and laid down in the shade and fell asleep.

Sports of the daughter of the Minister, and daughter of the Raja, in the garden.

Now it so happened that this pleasant garden belonged to the Minister, and that very morning his daughter Bikya and the daughter of the Raja had come there with all their maids and companions to take their pleasure; and they all sported about in the garden, and did not fail to jest each other about being married. Bikya filled her skirt with flowers and threw them on the Princess, and wished her an agreeable husband and a life of happiness; and the Princess declared that Bikya's face was so radiant that she surely must be about to be married that morning to the handsomest young man in all the world.

Bikya discovers Chan. trahasa.

Thus the young damsels enlivened the garden with their jests and laughter, and presently Bikya wandered away from the others, until she came to a tank, on the bank of which she saw sleeping a young man with such a charming countenance, that her heart burned towards him. Presently she saw a letter half falling from his bosom, and to her great surprise she perceived that this letter was addressed to her own brother, and was in the hand-writing of her father. Then remembering what her father had said to her about giving her to a husband, she drew the letter from the bosom of the young man, and opened it and read it through. And she had compassion upon him, and thought to alter the writing in the letter, and she read again the words:—"Chandrahasa is my enemy: Give him poison." Now the word signifying "enemy" was such, that by taking away a single letter she could turn it into a word signifying "friend;" and she did so. And the word signifying poison was Bika, and seeing that the young man was very handsome, she altered the word Bika into her own name of Bikya; and she re-sealed the letter with a copy of her father's seal which she had with her, and placed it back in the bosom of the young man. She then returned to her companions, and the Princess looked upon her countenance, and said:—"Ah, Bikya, your face betrays you; Have you not seen a young man, and have you not fallen in love with

Alteration of the letter.

him?" But Bikya only answered with a smile, and turned the conversation to another matter.

Chandrahasa delivers the letter to the Minister's son.

After some time, Chandrahasa rose from his sleep, and remounted his horse, and found his way to the house of the Minister, and delivered the letter to his son; and Madan read the letter with great surprise, but saw that the orders were very positive and that he must obey them without delay:—"Look not to his youth, nor to his comeliness, nor whether he be a man of rank, or learning, or abilities, but give him Bikya!" Madan then sent for the astrologers to fix a fitting day and hour for the nuptials, and they declared that sunset that same evening would be a most auspicious time; and Madan issued orders accordingly, and Bikya, who feared lest her father should return and spoil her plot, was immediately arrayed for the ceremony; whilst Chandrahasa, who was more confounded than any one, was presented with a bridegroom's dress, and directed to prepare himself to be married that evening to the beautiful daughter of the Minister.

Preparations for the marriage of Chandrahasa and Bikya.

The marriage.

At sunset everything was ready for the marriage, for Madan had been anxious to win the favour of his father by showing the utmost alacrity and zeal in carrying out the Minister's orders. He led his sister and Chandrahasa to a splendid couch, and seated them side by side. The Bráhmans, in due form, inquired the names of the fathers and grandfathers of the bridegroom and the bride; but when Chandrahasa was called upon to declare the names of his father and grandfather he replied that he was not aware that he had any father, grandfather, or mother, beyond the Almighty God. The Minister's son, mindful of his father's instructions, smiled at this reply, and desired the Bráhmans to proceed with the rite and to ask no questions; and the Bráhmans tied together the skirts of the bridegroom and the bride, and Chandrahasa and Bikya were thus made husband and wife. Madan then distributed magnificent presents of gold, jewels, silken stuffs, horses, elephants, sandal, and camphor; and the news spread throughout the city, and all the dancing-girls, musicians, and poets, as well as an immense

The presents.

multitude of people, flocked to the house of the Minister, and received so many good things that every street was filled with rejoicings and congratulations, and with prayers for the happiness of Chandrahasa and the lovely Bikya.

5. *Wrath of the Minister.*

Proceedings of the Minister towards the Zemindar.

All this time the Minister himself had been staying in the city of his dependent, and having sent away Chandrahasa, he wreaked his wrath upon the young man's adopted father. He threw the dependent into prison, and gave his office and all his great wealth to another of his retainers; and he imprisoned all the officers in that quarter, and grievously punished the Ryots with stripes. Having thus gratified his jealous rage, and being especially delighted at having destroyed his dangerous enemy, Chandrahasa, he returned to the city of Kutuwal at the moment when the marriage ceremony had been finally concluded. On reaching his own house he saw that an extraordinary entertainment was going on, for singers and musicians were performing a delightful concert, whilst drums were beating, and throngs of people were coming out laden with gold and presents. When the people saw the Minister, they loudly congratulated him on the happy marriage of his daughter Bikya with the hero Chandrahasa; and he looked round him with astonishment, and thinking that they were all mad, he ordered them to be driven away with whips. A second multitude approached him with similar compliments, and by his order were driven away in like manner. Last came a crowd of Bráhmans and Chieftains still offering the same congratulations, and the Minister, choking with rage and vexation, seized a whip from his servant and belaboured the Bráhmans with his own hand, until some threw down their presents and ran away, whilst others dropped their turbans, or fell upon their faces in fear and trembling.

Return of the Minister to his own house.

His surprise.

The Minister thunderstruck at the marriage of Chandrahasa and Bikya.

The Minister then entered his house in a state bordering upon madness, for all the women of his household thronged around him, and assailed him with a storm of

blessings and praises. He hastened to the Hall, and there he saw Chandrahasa and his own daughter, Bikya, sitting on the couch with their garments tied together as bride-groom and bride; and a trembling seized him, and he could not say a word, but could only suppose that his son must be mad. He went out, and seeing Madan, he cried out:—"O fool, what have you been doing? I sent you a man with orders to kill him, and you have given him my daughter in marriage, and thrown away all my money in presents to the people." Madan then produced the letter which had been brought to him by Chandrahasa; and as the Minister was unable to perceive the alterations which had been made, he was compelled to accept the orders as his own, and could only wonder at the greatness of his own blunder.

The Minister sees his own letter.

The Minister then began to reflect, and to perceive the importance of concealing his feelings; for he knew full well that if he began a quarrel at such a moment, or spoke evil of his new son-in-law, he would be condemned by all men. Accordingly, he returned to the newly-married pair, and endeavoured to conciliate his son-in-law by such excuses as he could invent for the occasion, and kissed his daughter and wished her joy. All the time, however, he was so vexed that he could have murdered every one in the house, but he was compelled to permit the wedding night to pass by without working out any scheme of revenge. Early next morning he sent for some Chandálas, and engaged them by the promise of large rewards to secrete themselves in the temple of the goddess Durgá, which was without the city, and to murder the man who should come at evening time to present a golden pot of incense to the goddess. He then summoned Chandrahasa, and informed him that it was the fixed rule for every man who married into his family to offer a golden cup of incense at the temple of Durgá; and Chandrahasa readily promised to comply with the custom that same evening.

Plot of the Minister to slay Chandrahasa in the temple of Durgá.

6. *The Raj given to Chandrahasa.*

Sudden abdication of the Raja in favour of Chandrahasa.

But this very day, being the day after the marriage, a

sudden resolution had seized the mind of the Raja. On the previous night he had dreamed a dream which in the opinion of the wise men of his Court betokened a speedy death, and he had also seen his own shadow without a head to it, which is an apparition that always betokens death within seven days. Accordingly, the Raja resolved upon retiring immediately from the Raj, and devoting the remainder of his days to solemn preparations for his coming end. Being ignorant of the return of his Minister he sent for Madan, and told him that he meant that day to resign his Raj, and said that he had heard so much of the virtue and piety of Chandrahasa that he was determined to make that young man his successor. He therefore desired Madan to bring his new brother-in-law to the palace with all speed, in order that the Raj might be conferred upon him without a moment's delay.

The Minister's son proceeds to the temple of Durgá.

Madan, overjoyed at the good fortune of his new brother-in-law, immediately set out in search of Chandrahasa, and presently found him on the road to the temple of Durgá, with the golden cup in his hand; and having briefly explained to him the urgent necessity for his immediate presence at the palace, he took the cup from his hand and promised to present it himself to the goddess. Madan thus sent back Chandrahasa to the palace of the Raja, and proceeded alone with the golden cup to the temple of Durgá. Darkness was now fast closing in, and Madan to his horror beheld many evil omens; an owl suddenly perched upon his head, and two cats fought each other in the middle of his path, whilst blood dripped from his eyes without any apparent cause. But it seemed to him that these omens pointed at Chandrahasa rather than at himself, and he fervently prayed that any evil which might be impending over so excellent a brother-in-law might be transferred to himself. At last he opened the door of the temple and went in, and was at once cut down by the swords of the assassins and slaughtered upon the spot.

His death.

Chandrahasa crowned Raja and married to the Raja's daughter.

Meantime, Chandrahasa had reached the palace where the Raja was holding a Council with his Chieftains. The

Raja then took the diadem from his own head and placed it upon the head of Chandrahasa; and sending for his own daughter, the same who had sported and jested with Bikya in the garden, he married her to the young hero. He then turned to his Council and said:—"I constitute this young man to be Raja over you: may he, and you, and all his subjects, be happy." The Chieftains burst into tears, and pledged themselves to accept Chandrahasa as their new Raja with all their heart and soul. The old Raja then stripped himself of his royal robes, and placed them upon Chandrahasa, and left the palace with only his cloth around him, and went off into the jungle and was heard of no more.

7. *Fatal end of the Minister.*

Chandrahasa pays a visit to the Minister.

The royal drums proclaiming the succession of a new Raja were then beaten throughout the city, and the Minister hearing the sound immediately inquired the cause, in the fond hope that it betokened the abdication of the Raja, which he had been long expecting, and the accession of his own son Madan to the Raj. The servant of the Minister told his master the truth, namely, that the Raja had given the Raj to Chandrahasa; but the Minister was so enraged at these words that he refused to believe them, and ordered that the tongue of the man who had spoken them should be cut out. Presently, a royal cavalcade appeared in sight, for Chandrahasa still believed that he owed all his good fortune to the Minister, and therefore had determined to pay him a visit that very evening, accompanied by the Raja's daughter, to whom he had been that day married. The Minister now more than ever comforted himself with the idea that his own son Madan had succeeded to the Raj, and was coming to receive his father's congratulations; but he was soon undeceived by the appearance of Chandrahasa, and for a while he was speechless with rage. Suddenly he inquired for Madan, and was told that he had gone in the place of Chandrahasa to offer the cup of incense in the

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temple of Durgá. At these words he uttered a loud cry, and ran with all haste to the temple, but only to find the slaughtered remains of his son; and maddened to desperation at the sight, he dashed out his own brains against a pillar and expired upon the spot.

Tragic end of the Minister.

Review of the foregoing story of Chandrahasa and Bikya.

The foregoing story of Chandrahasa and Bikya is one which throws considerable light upon the Hindú belief in astrology and good fortune; whilst even from a European point of view the plot will be regarded as ingenious and pleasing. Perhaps European taste may be slightly outraged by the steps taken by Bikya to secure for herself a handsome husband, but still her proceedings are not altogether unfeminine; nor are they foreign to Hindú ideas, which permits a young lady to choose a husband for herself on arriving at a marriageable age, unless one has previously been selected for her by her father or guardian. In like manner the two marriages of Chandrahasa, first to the daughter of the Minister and afterwards to the daughter of the Raja, is foreign to European sentiments although in accordance with Oriental institutions. Again, the rapid and forcible manner in which the good fortune of Chandrahasa, and the unlucky destiny of the Minister, are developed in the story, may be regarded as somewhat artificial or romantic; but still the whole may be accepted as a pleasing picture of Hindú life during the historical period, when the Mussulmans may already have established themselves at Delhi, but when the Dekhan was as yet undisturbed by their influence or sway.

Proceedings of Bikya in accordance with Hindú ideas.

Illustration of Hindú life in the historical period.

END OF VOL. I.

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